

March-2007

**EAST MEADOW SCHOOL COUNCIL
PARENT/ GUARDIAN SURVEY RESULTS**

Parents/ guardians were asked to respond to the following questions:

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OR POSITIVES OF THE EAST MEADOW SCHOOL?

Good teachers, good parent participation.

The Principal and staff are the major strengths at East Meadow. I honestly think you could not ask for a better bunch of people!

The A.S.A.P. program, good teachers and other staff-really great people. Good communication, well-rounded curriculum, after school program, caring staff, DARE program.

It's a safe school. Mr. Pietras is a great principal.

I think the character of the month is a great way to encourage the children to always strive for the best they can be. I am very happy with how Mr. Pietras always tries to keep up with all his kids. He shares a genuine concern and that is important. He makes it easy for the children to confront him if a problem arises.

I think the school has great staff, which provides for positive learning. I think your greatest strength is Mr. Pietras. I like how he gets involved, and knows all of the students.

The teachers are great – Mr. Pietras is so giving of himself to all children. School to home phone contact, good preparation of MCAS, great teaching staff, very pleased with East Meadow School

Extra math programs are great, teen night at High School is fantastic. Teachers are great. Mr. Pietras is a wonderful involved principal. It is great he allows the school to be used for other purposes such as GAP. Class sizes are small enough.

East Meadow has a great staff! From Ann Marie (there is no better secretary) to the dedicated teachers who put so much time and effort into their work. Thank you.

Caring staff, involvement of Jim Pietras with the students, ASAP program. Staff support (principal included), instrumental program, art, physical education, music, computers and library curriculum. After school activities.

Strong parent organizations, caring teachers and administrators looking out for needs of all children.

The ASAP program is a definite strength. Cathy has been able to put together a great program, with an opportunity for students to get some additional exercise or do a hobby with friends. Of course, it is always nice to have the extra support in math or reading for those students who need it. My child is doing very well in school and I am very pleased.

Excellent staff, principal and teachers. The teachers seem to want to learn how to make the best with each student.

Strengths are strong staff members, small school, good environment.

Page 2.

WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE STRENGTHS OR POSITIVE OF THE EAST MEADOW SCHOOL (CONT'D.)

Academics are a strength at East Meadow. This is reflected in the good state/ fed. standings as well as in the high rate of kids to college. We also promote music, arts, and sports, which enables and encourages our kids to be better rounded. I also like the fact that teachers encourage the students to enter their work in contests.

Good music programs! Incredible concerts! Improved food service-healthier and tastier. My child loves having many teachers and switching classrooms. This prepares the students for high school and beyond. A positive atmosphere – unity and teamwork.

I like the very personal relationships that the teachers and administrators have with the students and most importantly, the parents.

The structure is well laid out for the day and year. I have no complaints with the staff, they handle things professionally. Communication is great. My child loves going to school, my child loves her teacher. The environment allows her to excel academically. After school program, the band/ music program.

Parent/ teacher/ administration communication. A.S.A.P. program. Teachers, paraprofessionals and staff are great. Outside A.S.A.P programs would be great.

Administration, teaching staff, curriculum. We really appreciate the way our daughter is being challenged academically. We are amazed at how naturally she is rising to the challenge. It seems this is the perfect time for this to begin in her life.

This school has a close relationship with the children and treats each child individually.

Teachers, staff, curriculum.

Teachers in the classroom and support staff especially. The school would not run without Mrs. Sapowsky! Great job, thank you!

Caring staff, excellent gym program. I love the lunchtime volleyball, running, etc. that are offered. My daughter struggles with academics, and this is so healthy for her. Thank you for this. Also, the toe tokens have motivated her to enjoy running. ASAP is great and affordable. While I do not “love” the idea of a pie in anyone’s face, my daughter is so excited about this reading program. Lots of opportunities for parent participation. The principal and the teachers. I like the after school program and the weeklong summer program.

Special Education services.

The confidence that is instilled in the students by the teachers and principal. The monthly character awards also help the students self esteem. The many after school programs available offers the students a variety of different activities to try or if they prefer, a study club is available with a teacher at hand for questions/ help.

Teachers are supportive. Good and sufficient supplies in specials. After school programs are wonderful. All the staff at the school are great.

Page 3.

STRENGTHS/POSITIVES

The strengths/ positives of East Meadow are the teaching staff and the principal. Everyone is looking out for each student’s best interest. I like how the 4 teachers per grade are consistent with each other as far as the curriculum goes.

The most positive thing I see is our principal or head teacher. Together with the cooperation of all the teachers, he has a very good parent/ teacher relationship. Thanks to all teachers for the effort they put on our children, I personally find this very helpful. The conferences and PTO are some of the other positive things I like. Communication between parents and teachers is well done. Thank you all, we would never do without you.

Leadership is visible, accessible and flexible. The art and music programs (particularly the band program). The ASAP initiative. Culture of community.

School secretary is knowledgeable and helpful.

Communication with teachers with parents-but the conferences should be later in the afternoon for parents that work. There are a lot of half days. The faculty and the small town feel of East Meadow.

The principal and staff are wonderful. My child has had nothing but positive experiences at East Meadow. The ASAP programs are great and

provide a variety of activities to peak the interests of all the children. Communication between parents and the school/ teachers is also excellent! Our principal Mr. Pietras!

Small community school, gives more attention to the kids, friendly and understanding staff.

Mr. Pietras, band, after school programs, chorus, study club. After school activities, music, study club, GAP.

Principal, staff and teachers.

They have very interesting activities that my children are very interested in. The teachers are very kind and generous to my children. They improve my children's confidence more.

First of all, Mr. Pietras is very involved and "hand on" with everything about E.M. Our community size helps for our school environment to be much more personalized. Teachers are able to keep very good outlook on students because of our smaller class sizes.

The late bus, school security, regular school bus.

Polite and friendly office and health staff, after school activities, flexible academic programs.

All the programs you offer. Staff will answer any questions you may have. The caring attitude of the entire staff and their effort to make East Meadow a great place for our children to grow and learn.

The time spent with individual students. Always willing to accommodate them at anytime.

All the staff are very approachable. The principal makes the school available for GAA/ town activities.

Teachers spend good amount of time with kids.

The involvement of the staff and teachers.

Page 4.

STRENGTHS/POSITIVES (cont'd)

The involvement of the staff and teachers. The positive atmosphere in the school. The after school programs.

The added security buzzer at the front door is a plus. Also, the ASAP programs are great!

Sense of community, strong academic focus, excellent teaching, great principal, children have a sense of well-being and accountability.

The academics are strong, good test scores, % of college admittance, etc. Also staff and parent involvement is great, and it shows. I also like the fact that music, art and sports are also supported and encouraged. We are a small community and I think East Meadow is a very positive part of what makes Granby special.

Great environments, positive re-enforcements for the students, build the basics.

Parent-teacher communication is good. Our children feel safe in East Meadow. After school program is a bonus.

Mr. Pietras does a great job making the school a comfortable place for kids and their parents. He's always there when you need him.

We love the ASAP program and the after school activities. I love how Mr. Pietras socializes with the kids. So far it seems to have a great impact on my child.

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East Meadows greatest positive is the teachers and staff who are caring and wonderful people. Our daughters teachers this year are dedicated, hardworking people who go the extra mile for her.

The ASAP program is great! As well as the homework club.

Smaller school-you all know each other well. Many staff members know a good percentage of the kids.

Easy communication with staff, appropriate homework, in content and time, quality teachers and principal, extra-curricular activities offered. The communication between the teacher and students, as well as the teachers and parents is a great strength.

The care that the principal and staff have for the students.

The strengths of this school are the people that it involves. The teachers are mostly very involved and caring to the students. The principal is extremely hand on and does a great job communicating.

Great administration, support staff and faculty. Music program, art very good.

Dedicated, caring staff. Firm but fair principal. Great library, improved hot lunch program, after school programs, great security for entering building during school hours, safe warm atmosphere.

The overall, caring (going above and beyond) of the school staff and administration.

ASAP program-great!

Teachers that help with after school programs do a great job.

Page 5.

STRENGTHS/POSITIVES (cont'd)

I am thrilled with East Meadow as a whole. I think Mr. Pietras has a gift with the kids. I like how the teachers are interacting with one another in teaching the students. I like that there is study hall after school and activities.

After school programs, open house/ conferences early in the year. The East Meadow assignment book is a great tool. The activities in physical education have been super, (rope climbing, etc.)

ASAP programs, student of character, attempts to build sense of community and responsibility of all to make the school a better place.

The communication between everyone is very good, definitely a real positive.

Small size (grades, # of students), assignment books, work displayed in hallways.

Small class size. Caring and participation of parents and teachers as well as all the staff. Bullying and other problems are very minimal.

Everything is great...this is our first year at this school.

School seems more flexible and fun for students. Safe environment and good structure. Ample space for students and classrooms and directions seem simplified so students understand.

It is a small school - well organized. Parental teaches support to school development. After school programs. Children feel free and protected in the school environment.

Mr. Pietras, he's present, visible, involved and he knows everyone's name. The overall atmosphere of the school is wonderful. The kids have things to do after school and they want to do them.

Teachers are very approachable. Safe and clean. Activities available after school. Special needs are met.

Communication, accessibility.

Special after school activities, small population, principal availability. The creative and exciting teachers. Nature's Classroom.

I can't say enough about the staff at East Meadow – Mr. Pietras and Mrs. Sapowsky do a super job at making everything run smoothly!!

Page 6.

AS WE PLAN FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT, WHAT IMPROVEMENTS DO YOU FEEL WE SHOULD CONSIDER?

Extra time for independent reading or study for students. Community service projects for each class. Better updated bathrooms.

More inter-active website. If building new complex, incorporate community/ teen center.

I'm highly in favor of the new school complex!

After school programs to help children in particular areas of weakness. Full day kindergarten to help working parents. Sports after school.

Programs, tutors or extra help time slots for kids who need help or have questions. It doesn't seem like the students have time during the day set aside where they can ask teachers for extra help.

Make communication from teachers to parents. Maybe monthly agenda so we know when major test or projects are coming.

Have two parent/ teacher conferences.

**Teaching parents some of the new concepts in subjects to we can help our children with homework and studying, (new handwriting, math, etc.)
More computer time, typing on computer, learning.**

I really can't think of anything.

Additional teaching and support in math and science. Continued assessments of math instruction methods.

I have no complaints at this time.

**More publicity/ info. is needed for the general public about the plight of our school buildings and overall funding problems to ensure a positive future...
All students having recess. Not used as a discipline tool or to finish work.**

The gym is obviously insufficient for a modern middle school.

A more functional gym as well as a larger music room.

Keep up the good work of keeping the school clean and safe.

Money allocated for a full time nurse.

A before and after school program for those children who need it. I see many people leaving their children off at school sometimes ½ hour before the first bell.

I would like to see less homework (paperwork). There should still be practice math facts. Spelling work and reading for a length of time every night. I feel that there needs to be more quality time spent at home at night, instead of always having battles over getting homework done.

Not sure!

As an educator of adults at the post-secondary level, I cannot stress enough the importance of establishing the basics throughout these critical years. Please continue to strive.

I like that we are working to feed our kids better food, but I think we need to increase the amount of time the kids get to go outside for recess. If some kids don't come dressed for the weather, make them stay inside. The whole group should not be punished for a few. This is also something I would like to see change. I think too often, group consequences are used when only a few are at fault. I think it's time to stop being so concerned about protecting the feelings of those who break the rules. Make kids responsible. More support for classrooms and students. Programs for remediating at risk students.

More parent-teacher communication since there is only one conference time if a child is having difficulty! More time should be allowed for eating lunch. Sometimes when the kids finally get their lunch and sit down to eat, it is just about time to go.

Look at enlarging the gym and cafeteria. Offer after school intramural sports on a regular basis. New air filter system for classrooms, remove carpets from school.

No comment.

More after-school educational programs.

Everything is very good.

More parent/ teacher meetings on how the student is doing. Only twice have I met with teachers the whole year. I do homework with my son every day, but I don't know how he is doing. I've also had him get involved in after school activities.

Our town and school would benefit from an auditorium that is not shared with the cafeteria. Also a larger library.

You could work on the math; make it more complicated, more practices.

My children are trying to get some more dog or cat books, but there's not a lot.

Computer upgrades, expanded library, security system.

Bigger lunch room, separate from the stage area.

Per child: bathroom renovation, gym renovation, more recess equipment. The gym is a disaster.

Foreign language. Math and English curriculum that is more creative and less geared towards the MCAS! More integrated, project-based curriculum to promote creativity and independent learning.

I agree that there is a need for a summer program. As much as we would like to limit the number of hours our children are watching t.v., we would never do that without getting them busy with something else. Therefore, a summer program would do a lot of good.

After school activities programs would also be a lot of help. Remember, our children need to exercise a lot, so anything from football, basketball, volleyball, you name it, will be a good idea. Clubs, e.g., science clubs, domestic clubs, will also be good.

Full day kindergarten.

There should be a workshop for the students on different study techniques. It should be held during the school day for grades 4-6 so they could all benefit from the information.

Gym needs work.

Ropes and/or rock climbing wall in the gym-how about some intramural sports at East Meadow. ASAP does a good job at providing some, but why not an "East Meadow volleyball team" or "East Meadow running club" or any other sport that GAA does not offer. Academically can there be some different school projects. Having more than two kids doing the same project gets pretty boring for parents because they are usually the ones doing it.

Page 8.

IMPROVEMENTS (cont'd.)

Less homework.

Private e-mail addresses for every teacher. The parent's night was too close to the first day of school this year. Parents need more notice when they need to pay for school related activities such as field trips and for everything there should be the name of a contact person in case a parent needs additional time to get the money. My daughter freaks out because something has to be paid and she's afraid of anyone finding out we don't

have the money. The yearbook one was the worst, “no deposits will be accepted”. That’s fine if you have the money. If you don’t, it is upsetting and I always have to borrow to pay when I could pay it on the next Friday. Better control over your parking lot. Teachers that are coming in late are always flying through the lot trying to get a front row spot. There are a lot of parents dropping off their children at this time. It’s bad enough with the bus situation. Tell them to be on time and SLOW DOWN!! Park in back? Facilities upgrades, gifted student program.

Implement more exercise.

Right now we can’t think of anything. Just keep on your toes so that you will be prepared to deal with future challenges, which are bound to come. Two late buses so kids don’t get home so late. One hour on bus is too long. Expand extra-curricular programs. Think “out of the box” to bring outside speakers, topics, cutting edge programs, that take the children into new realms. Once a month, have a day focused on careers, college, work, and school, but focused study of one’s future. Encourage and develop a program of independent projects for extra credit. Don’t try to be good, the goal should be great!

More field trips (educational ones) for hands on education. I feel children grasp things better in an away environment. They will remember more, because of the road trip!

I am pleased with the over all system.

Mid-term progress reports would help parents.

I would like to see our students have to make more individual responsibility for themselves. Too often group consequences are utilized when in fact, only a few are involved. We spend too much time worrying about embarrassing kids or hurting their feelings in front of others. What happened to being help accountable for one’s actions? Why do all students have to have indoor recess because some kids aren’t dressed appropriately?

Large auditorium would be ideal. Stadium style seats like Belchertown. Updated playground and a larger public gathering space.

The connect-ed has bothered me for a few years. I signed up for it because if there was an emergency. I would want to be contacted. However, the schools use it for upcoming announcements and fundraiser reminders. A notice sent home is plenty. Also, the other people I put down for the emergency numbers also get calls. Next year I will not sign up for this so I hope an emergency never happens because I won’t know about it. It is too bad the principals of both schools use it for their announcements.

More time to be kids!! Recess is way too short. That is the problem with more of these students—there is no outlet in school for them. I hate that on some days my child has a choice to go out or stay in. They should all be outside running around being kids.

Facility, landscaping, playground area.

Closer integration with jr. sr. high school, especially with regard to the curriculum, coordination for all subjects (such as technology).

Higher level of opportunities for advanced learners. Continue to speak to students about bullying (all kinds).

Any and all improvements are welcome!

Updated phone system with voice mail for teachers. Instead of 3 marking periods I would like to see 4 like most schools. It is easier to see if grades are slipping and intervention can occur earlier. Late buses on all days ASAP activities are offered. Have high school students do more tutoring of younger kids and give incentives to the older students to make them want to tutor.

Conflict resolution programs given as a standard classroom program. Parent/ teacher conferences twice a year.

Before and after school programs.

One of my concerns is and has been the weight of my child's backpack. I find it funny that the school sent home an article about backpacks and how they should not exceed 15% of the child's weight. This means my child's backpack should not exceed 14 lbs.; regularly it is 18 to 20 lbs.

Maybe teach the teachers how to deal with students. Instead of yelling at them all the time – trying to respect the kids would be a huge step!!

Too many half days.

I think you're going in a good direction as far as after school activities – all different kinds.

An auditorium!

More swings for playground, better school lunches.

Page 10.

ONE OF OUR PAST GOALS HAS BEEN TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM. AFTER SPEAKING WITH YOUR CHILD, PLEASE COMMENT ON THE SCHOOL LUNCHESES!

Need to be healthier, more fresh fruit and vegetables available. Great if students could help make lunch – soups, salads.

Offer a'la carte, nutritious, low fat options. Salads, smoothies and fruit.

Better food choices, less carbs and fats. More protein, veggies and fruit.

I think they are a huge improvement! I mean, what was the nutritional value of a lunch of nachos and cheese with french fries?! UGH! Now the choices are healthy, there are fresh fruits and vegetables and it doesn't taste like airplane food.

Snacks sold in school are not necessarily healthy. More education to teach children the importance of eating healthy lunches/snacks. Children getting more involved in choosing healthy menus for the school as well as at home.

Variety – maybe 3 choices (salads, soups, yogurts, etc.) Tastier improved recipes. Survey kids which recipes they like and do not like – drop and replace unpopular lunches.

The lunches are fine.

Enjoys the lunch. She buys regular lunch almost everyday. The schedule does not always match the lunch. More fresh fruit.

The lunches are more like dinner foods, so my child won't get school lunch too often. He prefers typical lunch food at lunch; hot dogs, nuggets, burgers, etc.

The school lunches have improved very much from last year.

My son does not like the majority of lunches served.

Love the chocolate milk. Don't like so many days with bologna. Love the pizza sticks.

I have a 4th and 8th grader. Both pack a lunch almost daily – they say the lunches got worst when it was 'home cooked'. The 8th grader said most kids get the alternative lunch – no one gets hot lunch. Personally, I don't think they sound appetizing either.

Items my child would like to see on the menu include: clam chowder, clamstrips, extra crispy fried chicken.

Great improvement effort to change the lunch menu – much better. Take this with a huge grain of salt – my fourth grader is very picky. Reports that food is often times overdone (burnt)!

My daughter is quite fussy. She has a list of about 6 lunches that she will eat as a hot lunch. Otherwise, she is cold lunch. Her favorites include: spaghetti, tacos, potato bar, French toast, grilled cheese, American chop suey. She also enjoys the "extras" she can buy with snack money.

Portions seem to be better, but still seems that better quality food could be offered on a more consistent basis.

My child would like to see lots of different fruit with his lunches everyday. Example: pineapple, watermelon.

He liked the old lunches better, but also likes some of the new choices.

My daughter likes the lunches half of the time. The alternatives never seem to be good. She would like two choices for hot lunch.

Getting better – love the fruit and veggies offered. Home made is better than pre-packaged.

Lunch could be fresher.

More food choices. Good nutritious ones. Perhaps more fresh fruit and veggies. With all the farms nearby, it should not be too expensive. Also offer a breakfast program to those early students.

My child liked the old lunches better. Lunch is brought more from home this year. Wheat bread is also something my child does not eat. So that takes out all lunches served with that.

Lunch seems to be improved. The grilled cheese sandwiches need to go. I've heard lots of complaints on them. How healthy are the new drinks that these kids are buying?

My daughter likes the school lunches overall. She never eats cold lunch because it is mostly tuna and ham and if she does not like the hot lunch she doesn't really eat. But, that doesn't happen that often.

My children have overall been very happy with the lunches at the school. I like the food choices they get now but my kids aren't quite as thrilled. They like the slushies though. I would not change anything though – they'll get used to it.

Healthier – better than before.

A lot of their favorites have been eliminated or rarely served, like Chinese food, regular pizza and chicken nuggets. A lot of the new choices are not really appetizing to kids.

They seem to be successful. I would remove “ice” or “slushies” as options. Offer grilled cheese alternative more often during cold months (Nov-Mar). To have less fried foods, more fruits and vegetables.

Our child eats about 1/3 of the selections offered. Salad bar for the kids, healthy snack items.

Salad bar please!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Covers for the slushies would be good for the younger kids.
Bring Chinese food back!!**

My child eats the school lunch every day. She loves the baked potato bar, and would enjoy a salad bar or more alternative choices.

Bigger lunches.

Since my son takes his lunch to school we can't really comment on the school lunches.

Neither of my children have ever eaten a school lunch. I have no opinion.

I think they should have a more fruits/vegetables. Otherwise, it is good lunch food.

My child does not eat school lunches because she says the lines are too long. I think the addition of the fruit smoothie machine is a great choice. Kids get something good for them as a cool treat.

Per my child, the school lunches have improved a bit but he still complains about them. Doesn't like quality of food. Does not like the hamburger meat and says the cheese is plastic. Needs more flavor in food.

Well, I have children that have always been fussy. I like the idea of healthier lunches. They however, have been buying lunch more often now.

The school lunch program of menu selections needs serious attention. Better food. Selection and an upgrade of quality is all that is required. There are many superior products on the market without having to increase the cost of the lunch program. More attention to buying is needed.

She likes the potato bar, but for the most part she's not satisfied with the school lunches.

Our child rarely buys lunch, so we cannot comment adequately.

He does like the lunch, but there are a few things he doesn't like, which is o.k. because we are all different. All this is very important is a healthy diet. Our children are growing up and we have to be very careful about their diet because they may become at risk for very many diseases, e.g., obesity, cardiac diseases, which in turn shorten their lives.

My children are not happy with the new lunches and are buying lunch less. Lunches have been getting better. The nachos were better with the beef topping not the current chili topping. Would like mozzarella sticks back on menu.

My child thinks the lunches are okay.

You are still serving lunches that the kids don't really like. It should be a more child oriented menu.

School lunches are much more appetizing than previously. From what I've heard, the kids love having the slush machine – this is a great treat!

My child feels there should be more of a variety. She would like to see more fresh fruit.

The quality of the food needs to improve. Many times the food is prepared too far in advance. If the kitchen was used to prepare the food, instead of

transporting it, the quality would be better. I also believe gloves should be worn when serving the food.

She likes them and they seem affordable.

They need to be more appealing and healthy. Lunch staff needs to take more sanitary measures.

She likes only a few of the choices offered. She'd love a salad bar.

Favorites include: fish sticks, alfredo, baked potato. Dislikes: Pizza
My child liked the school lunches better last year. Also, I think the Huke Lau lunch is missed by all.

School lunches have improved greatly. Especially with new person. Choices are better, meals better.

Like homemade items. Would like more fresh fruit.

More a-la-carte choices.

We make lunch at home nearly every day.

Unfortunately, my child likes cold lunch, but they sound great to me. My child said that the vegetables need improvement.

Lunches have gotten much better. Salad bar should be offered every day. We bring lunch from home.

Not enough flavor, overcooked, bland.

Keep up the good work. The kids may complain, but that's only because the good is good for them. I would like to see E.M. get involved in composting too.

She's buying lunch more often and actually likes the food!

I think the best thing that could be added would be a salad bar. With limited recess time, this would offset the exercise a bit.

Larger variety of healthier food. Meals that resemble home cooked meals. He says you should have soft tacos along with hard tacos. My child has to have lunch – food is important to him. He talks to all the kids about lunch and the stuffed shells are not a fan of most of his group. On stuffed shell day please offer something else.

PAGE 13

OTHER GENERAL COMMENTS AND THOUGHTS!

Great school!

Door bell and safety camera is a real plus.

Keep up the good work.

Principal and teachers are great!

Mr. Williams – the music “extravaganza” in June that is combined with the high school is way too long. It made it very unenjoyable. Please let the music staff know that many parents were upset by this and would appreciate keeping East Meadow and the High School concerts separate. Thanks for asking.

Keep up the good work.

I like locking of the front door, having to ring the bell during school for getting in.