



- **A Message from the Superintendent**
Page 1

- **Unplug & Connect: A Night for Family Togetherness**
Page 2

- **EPS Hydroponic Garden Club**
Page 3

- **Registration Dates**
- **Spring Break Tips**
Page 4



A Message from the Superintendent

In our ongoing commitment to fostering modern literacy and student engagement, I am pleased to announce a special collaborative project with *The Gazette*. Recently, I joined the editorial team to record a four-part podcast mini-series exploring foundational pillars of our district.

This project provided a unique opportunity to utilize the same professional-grade podcasting equipment currently integrated into our student programming. We are already seeing the impact of this technology across grade levels: middle school students are using the studio for elective coursework, while our fourth graders have produced 'Day in the Life' segments to master narrative sequencing. By providing access to these diverse platforms, we ensure our students have the opportunity to explore new ways of storytelling and practice the sophisticated communication and technical literacy essential for the modern world.

The *Gazette* podcast series consists of four focused discussions. The first two episodes are available in this edition, with the concluding segments to be released in June.

I invite you to listen as we discuss the work being done to move East Prairie forward.



Podcast Series Overview

- **Episode 1 | Systems of Support:** An analysis of the frameworks EPS utilizes to ensure every student receives personalized academic and emotional interventions.
- **Episode 2 | High Levels of Learning for ALL:** A discussion on how we define and maintain rigorous academic standards across all grade levels.
- **Episode 3 | Beyond Academics (June Release):** Exploring the holistic East Prairie experience and our commitment to well-rounded student development.
- **Episode 4 | Future Ready (June Release):** A look at the strategic initiatives preparing our students for success in an ever-evolving global landscape.

**Episode 1:
Systems of
Support**



**Episode 2:
High Levels of
Learning for ALL**



Unplug and Connect: 2026 East Prairie SEL Family Night

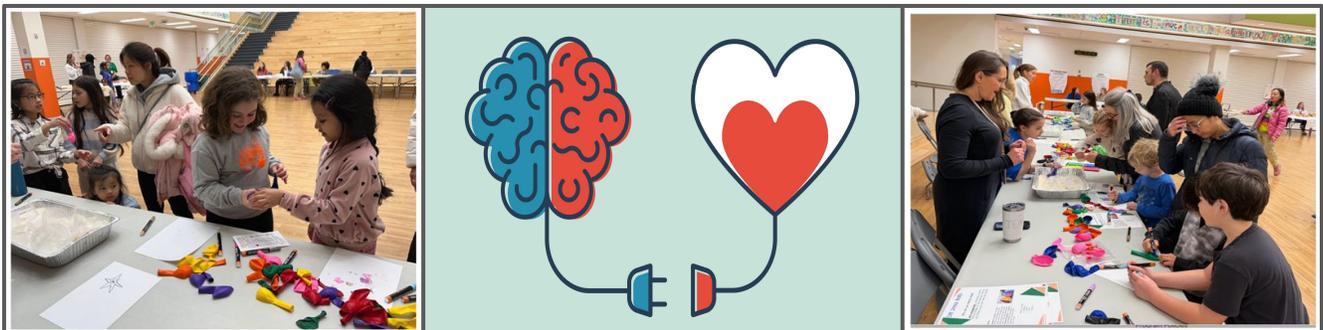
This past February, East Prairie hosted its annual Family SEL Night. This year's theme, Unplug + Connect: A Night for Family Togetherness, encouraged families to swap screen time for real-time engagement. The goal was simple: to remember that meaningful interaction requires presence, not just proximity.

The gathering was more than an opportunity to put away devices; it was a deliberate investment in Social Emotional Learning (SEL). The event helped parents and children alike sharpen the "human skills" that modern technology often replaces.

Participants engaged in activities specifically designed to foster the core competencies of SEL:

<p>SELF AWARENESS</p> <p><u>What It Is</u> Recognizing your own emotions, thoughts, and values</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Build your own mood meter. Check in with yourself and your family.</p>	<p>SELF MANAGEMENT</p> <p><u>What It Is</u> Regulating your emotions and behaviors in different situations.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Stress-Ball Station: Create a tool to help manage big feelings.</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP SKILLS</p> <p><u>What It Is</u> Establishing and maintaining healthy, supportive connections.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Collaborative Art: Working together to create a masterpiece.</p>
<p>DECISION MAKING</p> <p><u>What It Is</u> Making caring and constructive choices about behavior.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Scavenger Hunt: Solving problems and making choices as a team.</p>	<p>SOCIAL AWARENESS</p> <p><u>What It Is</u> Taking the perspective of others and empathizing with them.</p> <p><u>Activity</u> Cultural Snack Tasting: Celebrating diversity through food.</p>	

While academic achievement is vital, the "human skills" cultivated through SEL are the true foundation for a thriving life. Thank you to all of our staff, students, families and community members for making this such a successful event!



Sprouting Success: East Prairie's First Hydroponic Garden Club

The hallways of East Prairie were buzzing with energy this winter as students in grades 2 and 3 gathered weekly for the district's inaugural Hydroponic Garden Club. This hands-on exploration into "dirtless" farming sparked incredible interest, drawing many eager young growers to dive into the cutting edge of agricultural science.

Growing Without Ground

Over the course of the program, these student enthusiasts bypassed traditional pots and soil, diving headfirst into the world of hydroponics. Meeting every week, the club members transformed a corner of the first floor Community Room into a living laboratory. They learned that by utilizing nutrient-rich water and specialized lighting, they could grow vibrant, healthy plants indoors regardless of the weather outside.

The young gardeners took ownership of a variety of fresh plants, learning the nuances of:

- **The Hydroponic Process:** How plants "drink" nutrients directly from water.
- **Plant Maintenance:** Monitoring growth cycles and ensuring the systems were running smoothly.
- **Sustainability:** Discussing how indoor farming can provide fresh food in urban environments.



Family STEAM Night Showcase

The club's hard work and green (though soil-free!) thumbs were a highlight of East Prairie's Family STEAM Night. The students moved from behind the lab bench to the front of the stage, transforming the space into a bustling, student-run farmer's market where they served as expert guides for their families.

They proudly showcased their lush harvests, explaining the mechanics of their systems to impressed parents and peers. It was a perfect demonstration of how student-led curiosity can bloom into real-world expertise.



This program's success and the incredibly positive environment it fostered are thanks to the dedicated staff who saw the potential in this high-tech garden. A huge thank you to Mrs. Mortell, Mrs. Mehr, and Mrs. Mansour for their time, leadership, and for making the Garden Club such a rewarding experience for every student who signed up. Thanks to their guidance, East Prairie isn't just growing plants- it's growing the next generation of scientists and innovators.

Preschool and Kindergarten Registration



Register your child for the 2026-2027 School Year!

Preschool is free for eligible students!

NEW Student Enrollment for Pre-K and Kindergarten opened February 26th!

Please pick up an enrollment packet in the front office between 7:30am-4pm, Monday - Friday or print one from our website at eps73.net.

Preschool Requirements

- *Children must be 3 years old on first day of attendance
- *To be considered for free preschool, please bring recent W2, two recent pay stubs, or proof of state benefits
- *Birth Certificate
- *Parent ID
- *\$200 Non-Refundable Deposit (if applicable)
- *District 73 residency is not required but will be given preference

Kindergarten Requirements

- *Children must be 5 years old by September 1, 2026
- *Birth Certificate
- *Parent ID
- *Proof of residency is **required**



Stay Connected

Follow us on social media and join the [EPS Alumni Network by clicking on this link and completing the questionnaire!](#)



X



Facebook



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ALUMNI NETWORK

Wellness Corner



By: Mrs. Mansour

Spring Break Mindfulness Tips

You are your child's first teacher. They watch, listen, and learn from you. Here are some great ways to stay connected, and begin some great mindfulness practices as a family over spring break. Doing these practices with your child and modeling mindfulness can set you and your child up for success.

- ★ **Three Collective Breaths:** Find a comfortable seated position. Take 3 deep breaths together as a family, making your inhale a count of three and your exhale a count of 5.
- ★ **Name it to Tame It:** When your child can name the emotion, they can better articulate how they are feeling. If your child mentions they are feeling sad, acknowledge it and also see if you can help them identify if the emotion can be defined as disappointed, frustrated, feeling excluded, etc. Teaching your child these words can help your child express the emotion so she can respond.
- ★ **5-4-3-2-1 Reset:** Take a deep breath. Look around the room and notice 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you touch or feel, 2 things you smell, and 1 thing you taste or sense. End with a deep breath and notice how you feel.
- ★ **Attitude of Gratitude:** Think of someone you are grateful for and send gratitude their way. As you think about them, smile, and send gratitude their way. End with a deep breath.
- ★ **Thankful Thinking:** Along with an attitude of gratitude, naming 3 things we are thankful for can really help change mindset. Try starting a family gratitude journal! You can work on it together each day, by journaling about 3 things that happened that you are grateful for. You can start with a prompt like, "What made you smile today?"

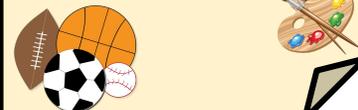
Thank you for all you do to make this community a better place! Have a wonderful Spring Break! Check out <https://breatheforchange.com/resources/> for additional resources.

Calendar Reminders

- March 20 - No School; Conferences
- March 27 - April 5 - Spring Break
- April 7 - April 17 - IAR Testing
- April 24 - PTA Panther Dash
- May 12 - May 21 - Spring MAP Testing
- May 25 - No School
- June 4 - Last day of school

Summer Camp

With summer just around the corner, explore the fantastic summer camp opportunities offered by the Skokie Park District. Click the link [here](#) to learn more - registration is NOW OPEN!



East Prairie School District 73

7616 East Prairie Road
Skokie, IL 60076
Tele: 847-673-1141
Fax: 847-673-1186

Gazette Editors

Samantha Bersion
Madison Krug
Tori Sarantakis - Podcast Producer



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