



TODAY

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Let the children come...

EMS to purchase MennoMedia property at 1251 Virginia Avenue to provide the added footprint necessary to develop a modern K-5 elementary facility adjoining Main Campus

I stand with Jesus! The gospel writers Matthew, Mark, and Luke each report the same story when Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Children are our most precious, yet vulnerable, asset of human society. They are the hope for a better future. No one more than they need a strong Jesus-centered educational start in life.

The EMS “Let the Children Come” campaign is our appeal to everyone in the EMS community to rally together in creating a permanent K-12 campus at 801 Parkwood Drive. The stewardship of shared facilities, synergy of educational programming, and conveniences for parents and nearby inter-educational and inter-generational opportunities, add countless intangible benefits for students and the community. Our history is rich, and together, our future bright. This issue of *Today* highlights our K-12 campus plan and begins sharing our “Let the Children Come” vision.

Our Story

Founded in 2005, Eastern Mennonite Elementary School began in the lower level of Lindale Mennonite Church with 24 students, three faculty, many volunteers, and two grades per classroom. Within three years we outgrew that space and began a transition to the temporary Route 11 North Campus located at 314 Cornerstone Lane,

Harrisonburg, about four miles from Main Campus. The leased North Campus has allowed program establishment and growth to an optimal enrollment of 90+ students. Modular classroom “cottages” positioned around a central building facilitate outdoor activity, making play spaces and fresh air an integral part of our school day. Grass stains on play clothes mean it’s been a great day at EMES!



“It is hard to say how new ideas sprout; but, sprout they do as one fleeting comment here and a short conversation there ignites a spark in another’s mind. Ideas connect dreams with community resources allowing seeds to sprout into a growing, living and thriving thing.” - Lynette Mast, EMES founding parent

The EMES Distinction

The focus of spiritual growth at EMES centers on following Jesus. By reading the stories Jesus told to others and hearing about Jesus’ life, our students gain an understanding of God’s love for them, while opening their arms to others. Students

meet weekly in “Gathering” to sing, reflect on Jesus’ ways, share faith stories, and to hear how others live out their faith. A weekly peacebuilding class allows students to discern ways to serve, to care for the world, and to contribute to community life. We learn to live peacefully together and to demonstrate God’s love for all people. Each classroom teacher integrates these themes into daily routines. In all classes, students are challenged to look at the world through the eyes of Jesus and find ways to serve and help those around them.

At EMES, leadership skills blossom through circle times, class meetings, event planning, public speaking, and interactions across grade levels. Committees comprised of students in grades K-5 plan special Spirit Day events for the whole school. Reading buddies allow younger and older students to form special friendships. Students sit in multi-age tables during lunch and play at recess with those from other classes, allowing connections between students without the boundaries of grade levels. Student confidence grows as they share their talents, ideas, and beliefs with the whole community.

EMES creates a place where students are engaged academically and emotionally. Learning takes place in an experiential learning environment where students are given time to explore, create, and wonder,

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Let the children come...

Eastern Mennonite School Proposed Master Plan

Entrance & Exit Safety: Strategically located, entrance and exit points keep traffic away from Parkwood Drive during rush hours and quickly get people to convenient parking locations.

Front of School Parking: Expanding the length and width of the driveway in front of the school benefits morning drop-off and adds more parking space convenience for daytime visitors to the campus.

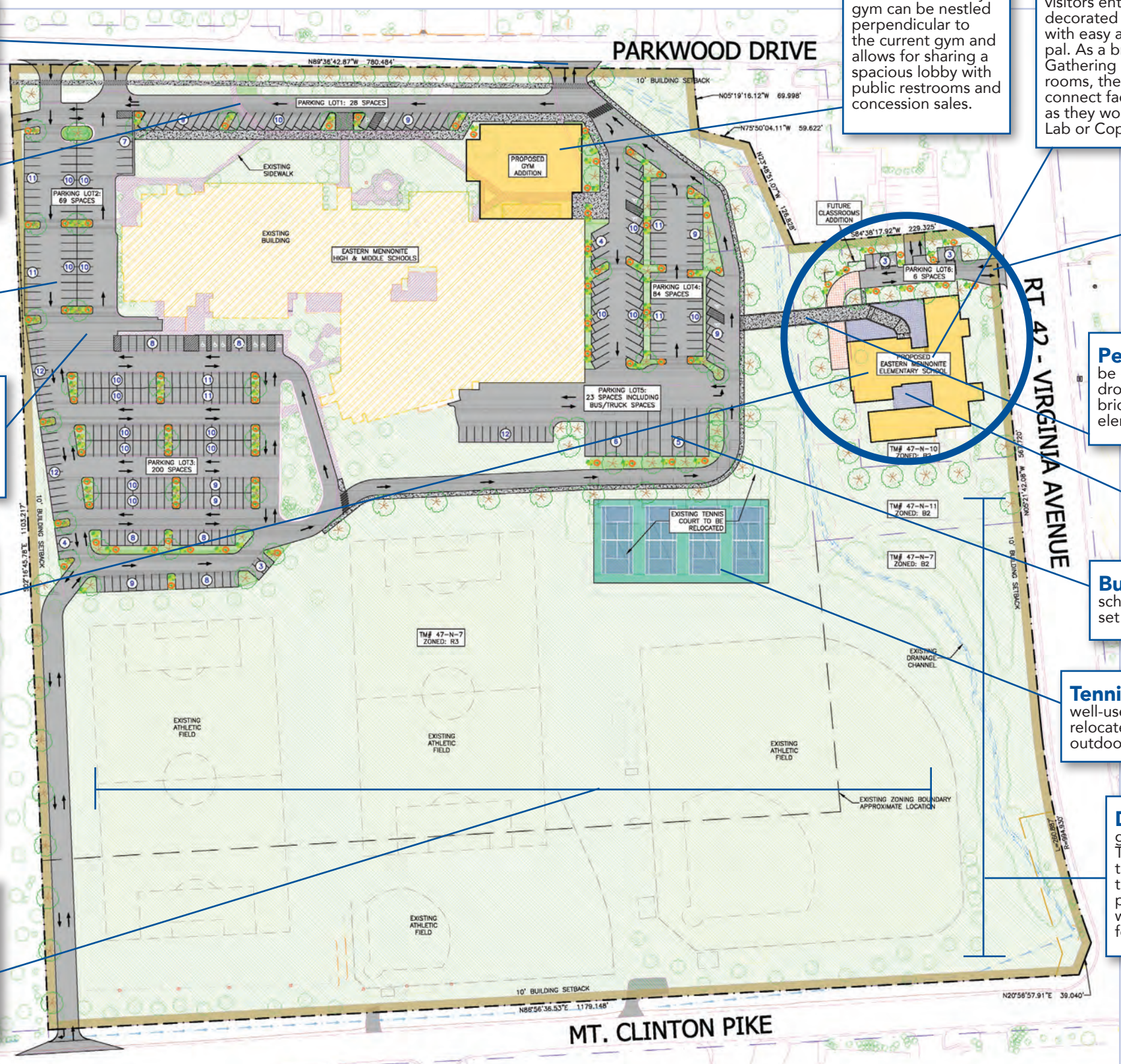
Parking Surface Upgrades: All parking lots are asphalted with green areas providing shade and treatment of water run-off. Parking spaces are clearly marked with prime parking for handicap accessibility.

Improved Traffic Flow: Directional arrows and fewer cross traffic intersections create smooth traffic patterns and enhance student, driver, and pedestrian safety. The roadway and sidewalk surfaces also offer extensive areas for bike riding activities during designated times for the elementary students.

Gathering Space: Designed to be the center of community for EMES, the Gathering Space is designed to feel airy, refreshing, and naturally lit. Adjacent storage space allows for quick exchanges of furniture making the space multipurpose. Large glass walls are designed to open so the facility can expand onto the Outdoor Plaza during fall, spring, and summer events. We desire for the Gathering Space to be energy efficient and use its orientation to generate significant amounts of electricity for the school. This space will be the hub of school activities including Gathering (Chapel), lunch, PE, science fair, book fair, dessert theatre, parent meetings, Grandparents Day, visitation days, conference days, and any other EMES community event. We suspect the Gathering Space and outdoor plaza will also be a prime rental space of interest to outside groups.

Shared Facilities: Opportunities for facility and programs abound. Shared dining hall services, auditorium, library systems, kiln, maintenance services, gym, fields, parking areas, internet access points, and site infrastructures make a K-12 campus sensible. Additionally, the convenience of one-stop transportation for children and the benefit of quality facilities from K-12 serves everyone well.

Play & Recreation Space: Fresh air and areas for creative play are essential for the one-of-a-kind elementary experience of EMES. Our K-12 campus provides fantastic variety with nearby Park Woods, wet weather gardens, wooded riparian area, terraced amphitheatre, hard surface courts, athletic fields, bicycle paths, and an auxiliary gym during winter months.



Auxiliary Gym: Every K-12 student will benefit from additional space for play, physical education, and interscholastic competition. The auxiliary gym can be nestled perpendicular to the current gym and allows for sharing a spacious lobby with public restrooms and concession sales.

Central EMES Office: Front and center, parents and visitors enter a welcome area decorated with student artwork, with easy access to the principal. As a bridge between the Gathering Space and classrooms, the office area also helps connect faculty with the public as they work in the Teaching Lab or Copy Center.

Handicap and Short-term Access: Partnering with Virginia Mennonite Missions, a shared easement gives VMM access to their preferred parking while granting EMES handicap accessibility and convenient short-term and delivery parking. This partnership allows EMS to convert many of the current asphalted areas into green spaces while keeping all traffic away from children.

Elimination of Storage Outbuildings: The warehouse portion of MennoMedia provides the space needed for current grounds equipment, allowing us to abandon four unsightly outbuildings while gaining parking space.

Bright Classrooms: At 1,050 square feet, each classroom is one-third again larger than our present "cottages" and has additional space for storage and direct restroom access. Enlarged windows also provide natural light making the classroom brightly lit, spacious, and cheerful. Classroom design encourages work/project stations and student engagement in learning.

Pedestrian Bridge: The first step toward EMES will be onto an attractive pedestrian bridge that leads from the drop-off zone and parking area of the elementary school. This bridge crosses the wet-weather stream bringing guests to the elementary plaza and entrance to the school.

Play Courtyard: The protected courtyard gives younger children (K-2) a special play zone with age-appropriate climbing bars designed for skeletomuscular strength. This space can also serve as a before or after-school play area with easy access to and from the office.

Bus Parking: Designated space is preserved for the school fleet to provides an organized, aesthetically pleasing set of service vehicles for athletics, field trips, and bus routes.

Tennis Court: The existing tennis courts have been well-used and are in need of repair. This plan calls for a relocated, finished surface great for tennis and shared outdoor court space for elementary recreation.

Defined Wetlands & Outdoor Learning Areas: Rain gardens are required to manage roof and parking lot water treatment. They also offer outdoor learning spaces for students to monitor vegetative growth. The "no mow zone" has been established to help filter the headwaters of Black's Run but can also serve as a natural area for play, building forts, and observing flora and fauna habitats. As a wet weather area, the defined embankments provide creative play areas for children to explore.



Area in the blue circle shows MennoMedia property purchase.

VISION:
Eastern Mennonite School aspires to reflect Christ's light as a learning community where every student belongs, thrives, and lives God's call.



Let the children come...

A Good Problem

The Rt. 11 North Campus site was strategically temporary. It allowed us to field-test the demand for a permanent elementary division. Current enrollment growth, wait lists, and crowded spaces, combined with deteriorating buildings, location inconvenience, and an alternative vision for the property's future use by the current landowner, are driving our need for permanent space.

Our annual lease and cold, windy weather reminds us of EMES' temporary conditions. The modular classrooms have significant structural and energy efficiency issues, demanding more and more repair, time, and money. The floors near the doorways are deteriorating, water pipes freeze annually, and decking boards frequently need replacement. We have deferred much maintenance on these buildings because investing in these temporary structures is not wise stewardship.

Space limitations are also prevalent. Small classrooms make active learning labs and small group collaboration difficult. In addition, the lack of storage space makes project-based learning cumbersome. Our Gathering space is just large enough to house our entire student body at lunch, and is now too small for larger key events such as Grandparent's Day or our international dance event. The Gathering space cannot adequately service lunch, small group work, book buddies, piano lessons, indoor P.E., and other activities as our school grows. The small Principal's office must also serve as flexible meeting space for parent committees, small group work, private meetings, and even acts as our infirmary. Well-designed expanded spaces will eliminate our problem areas while providing even greater opportunities for growth efficiencies.

Design Elements

Excitement abounds for the blessings intentionally-designed space will bring EMES children! The new Gathering space is centrally located and opens up to an outdoor plaza. This space will be used for many purposes: elementary Gatherings, daily lunch, and for countless special events like Grandparents Day, Dessert Theatre, joint activities between age groups, and even as a rental resource for broader community use. Outfitted for flexibility, the new Gathering space and plaza is naturally lit, open, inviting, and will be the place that brings us together as a community.

Spacious classrooms, strategically arranged, service all grades and specialty classes. Larger classrooms give teachers creative



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instructional advantages, space for projects in progress, and the convenience of built-in restrooms for younger students. Office, greeting and conference spaces have been added and room for a preschool classroom is also included. All classrooms have quick access to the outdoors allowing students to play in natural surroundings on a daily basis. Adjacent Park Woods offers an additional outdoor environment for science classes or for walks in the woods. There is ample space to continue the EMES gardening initiative and countless places for students to explore and create outside. All areas of the school will be ADA compliant, improving opportunities for intergenerational enrichment.

We are enthusiastic about being on one K-12 campus with three distinct school divisions! We have enjoyed past mentoring opportunities between elementary and older middle and high school students and know these will happen more easily and intentionally in this new location, benefiting our curriculum and K-12 students. We are also excited about connecting more with retirees at Virginia Mennonite Retirement Community, which is just walking distance away. For years EMU faculty and students have partnered with us to organize a health fair for our students. Now we can walk to this event, saving transportation cost and valuable classroom time for this project ... and many more to come! Being in town and part of a larger campus also eliminates the isolation and security vulnerability often felt on the more secluded North Campus.

We are excited to see the ways our students embrace this new space and make it their own!

Economic Benefits

EMS has explored everything from squeezing EMES on currently owned property to purchasing green-field acreage to develop a brand new K-12 campus. The more we explored the more convinced we have become in the stewardship benefits of revitalizing the MennoMedia property. The building is structurally solid and constructed for renovation ease. Re-purposing a good structure is a wise use of the world's limited resources. Design possibilities also make this facility contemporary and attractive, with high visibility, accessibility, and amenity plans that will make it a center of interest and demand for the greater community.

In recent years, when EMES enrollment has been near capacity, the elementary has generated positive net income for EMS. In

Estimated Cost by Project Phase	
Site Work & Soft Costs	\$1,081,000
Renovations	\$2,557,000
Gathering Space	\$995,000
Auxiliary Gym	\$1,367,000
Total	\$6,000,000

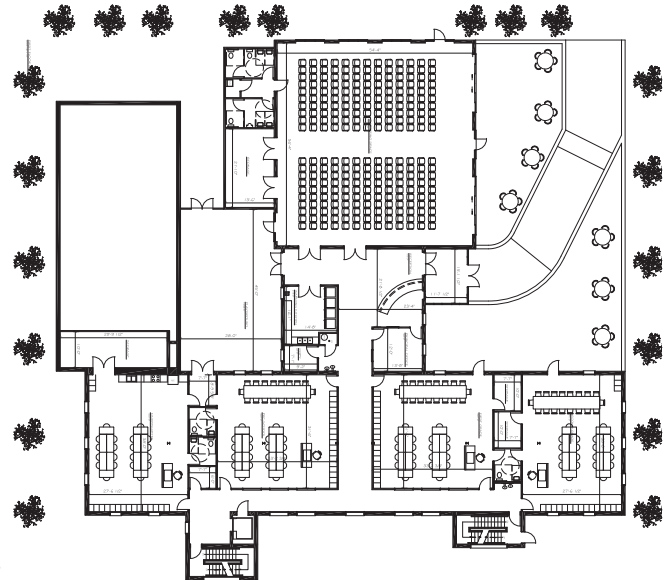
addition, campus ownership and associated synergies forecast net savings in excess of \$50,000 per year. Added space will permit a reduction of student wait lists as we discern the demand for a second section of elementary students. Ultimately, by combining EMS resources with those of the community, we believe the magnitude of this K-12 project is possible *but we need your help.*

Next Steps

As the first step, EMS has purchased the MennoMedia property and is beginning a feasibility study to explore how complete

we can develop our K-12 campus vision. We are testing a \$6.0 M capital campaign that will need to be phased in to match the level of support available from the community. In addition to the property purchase, EMS can finance one million of the project.

A strong K-12 Christian school presence in the Shenandoah Valley strengthens the attractiveness of our region for families seeking business and life opportunities. Please be in prayer about ways you can connect with this EMS vision over the next 3-5 years and "Let the Children Come."



Meet Rebekah Basinger, Basinger Consulting



(Courtesy Photo)

EMS is pleased to announce that Rebekah Basinger of Basinger Consulting has agreed to assist the “Let the Children Come” through her expertise and professional services. For the past 25 years, Rebekah has provided fundraising counsel to and conducted development audits, campaign feasibility studies, and program reviews for close to 200 faith-based organizations. The EMS Board of Directors unanimously supported her selection in June 2016. Highly recommended and respected in the non-profit, education and development sectors, Rebekah Basinger has already been a tremendous asset in consulting EMS on campaign best practices. Rebekah’s warm personality, expert knowledge, and energetic ideas quickly convinced our LTCC planning committee that she was the person for us.

Rebekah’s consulting style asks probing questions, listens carefully, and finds connections and themes in the answers given. Her goal with EMS will be helping us draw upon our collective wisdom, experience, and best intuitions for conducting “Let the Children Come.” During August 2016, Rebekah will be interviewing constituents as part of a feasibility study to explore our community’s interest and capacity toward fulfilling our K-12 campus vision. The feasibility research finishes by early October 2016 when the EMS Board discerns the scope of our campaign. Rebekah’s support then turns to coaching our campaign team during implementation to maximize success.

We are already delighted with Rebekah’s work. Her mission, “Inspiring greater generosity, one organization at a time,” speaks of her dedication to EMS. She also writes prolifically, having created *Generous Matters*, an educational blog on fundraising, board governance, stewardship, faithfulness, and generosity in all its forms. Additionally, Rebekah has also co-authored and contributed chapters to numerous books. We hope you have the chance to meet Rebekah and at least take the chance to learn from her at basingerconsulting.com and generousmatters.com.

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whether in the classroom or outdoors. Time is given for exploration, making connections, reflection, and discussion. Together these activities allow for deep understanding to take place. A natural bridge between school and life is made each day as students discover the wonder of science, math, social studies, reading, and writing all around them.

Students also participate in specialty area classes on a daily basis. Twice weekly, students participate in music, art, and Spanish. Students are given the opportunity to participate in musical productions, formal and informal drama presentations, and a K-12 art show. In addition, students enjoy physical activity each day with an emphasis

on sportsmanship, physical fitness, and the enjoyment of exercise.

These components of the EMES experience: faith development, community building, and a rich curriculum, work in tandem. Together they provide a learning community where students actively learn, grow in self-confidence, find their place in God’s world, and go beyond themselves to help others.

We hope you will share in the excitement for K-12 Christian education excellence in our community as highlighted in this issue of *Today*. . . ***Let the children come . . . to Main Campus at 801 Parkwood Drive!***

Today is published six times a year for families, alumni and friends of Eastern Mennonite School. We value your input. Send your feedback and story ideas to: today@emhs.net.

Look for previous issues of Today online at <https://issuu.com/easternmennoniteschool>

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& Paul Leaman
(Head of School).**



Congratulations Class of 2016!

On June 5, 2016, EMS proudly awarded diplomas to the 55 members of the Class of 2016. There are countless distinctives that make an EMS education unique. EMS Director of Academics Patsy Seitz highlighted many of these in her address to the graduates: "I [also] want to recognize the growth in gifted behaviors that all of our Seniors have demonstrated. In their journey together, whether long or short, they have spurred each other on, academically and spiritually. In the classroom, on the playing field, or on stage, they have honed their skills, including the ability to think critically and deeply, to ponder the big picture, and to pay attention to small details. Today we recognize their achievement with a diploma, but ultimately, time will give them the chance to truly see all the lessons they learned in their time at Eastern Mennonite School."

The Class of 2016 plans to continue deepening their learning through gap years of service and work and by attending this variety of colleges, universities and training programs:

Where You'll Find the Class of 2016

Blue Ridge Community College
Bridgewater College
East Tennessee University
Eastern Mennonite University
George Mason University
Goshen College
Hesston College
J. Sargant Reynolds Community College
James Madison University
Longwood University

Massanutten Regional Library
Massanutten Technical Center
Messiah College
Occidental College
Roanoke College
Service Adventure
Temple University
University of California Irvine
University of California San Diego
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

University of Tennessee
University of Virginia
Virginia Tech
Washington & Lee University
Washington University St. Louis
Woodrow Wilson Workforce Center
Wheaton College
YWAM Colorado Springs



Class of 2016 Valedictorian Luke Hertzler and Salutatorian Erin Rhodes presented remarks to their classmates.



The Reverend Leonard Dow, pastor of Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, gave the 2016 Commencement address. Entitled "A Good Report," Rev. Dow encouraged students to reflect on how they will accept and react to changes in their lifetime.



EMS Class of 2016 "lifers" used to mean graduates who attended EMS for grades 6-12. With the addition of our elementary school in 2005, lifers now have longer "lives" as many of our students matriculate from our elementary division to our middle and high divisions.

(Photos by Azariah Cox)

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The Class of 2016 had an impressive academic record of achievement, earning over \$3,000,000 in college scholarships and grants! Forty graduates earned a 3.5 Grade Point Average or above, qualifying them for Honors recognition of Cum Laude (GPA 3.5 - 3.749), Magna Cum Laude (3.75-3.99) or Summa Cum Laude (4.0 and above). To achieve such honors, these students chose to pursue the most rigorous courses that EMS has to offer, including AP courses, independent honors and research projects, and or coursework at the university level. Ten Seniors earned an EMS Honor Scholar Award by completing additional optional coursework and specific criteria set by the academic departments. We were also honored to have three commended National Merit Scholars and one National Merit finalist, Megan Good. Clearly this class has demonstrated academic excellence throughout their time as EMS students!

Congratulations Class of 2016 on all your accomplishments! We will miss you greatly at EMS but look forward to seeing you apply your gifts and knowledge in our local and global communities!



The Class of 2016 takes a moment for one last group photo prior to the 98th Commencement ceremony of Eastern Mennonite School.



Laura Rittenhouse '16 exudes just how great it feels to hold a diploma in hand.



Nathan Cripe '16 receives a warm congratulatory hug from family.



Kyle Trissel '16 receives cheers and high fives as he exits the 2016 Commencement ceremony. Each year faculty exit Commencement first so they can make a "cheering tunnel" as new graduates leave the ceremony. This tradition signifies the close, supportive relationships which form between student and teacher at EMS.

Want to learn more about the EMS difference?

The best way to understand the value of an EMS education is to spend time with us! Come visit our classrooms, meet our excellent teachers and students, and learn how we integrate faith, academics, integrity and service into all we do K-12. We have a limited number of spaces available in a few elementary, middle and high school grades for the 2016-17 school year - it's not too late to apply and try a new beginning at a new school! We are also accepting applications for the 2017-18 school year, as waiting lists are forming in several grades. **To learn more contact admissions@emhs.net or call (540) 236-6021 to visit any of our divisions. All are welcome at EMS - come see the difference for yourself!**

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MISSION:

Eastern Mennonite School joins home and church in calling students to faith in Jesus Christ, academic excellence, personal integrity, and compassionate service in the world.



SAVE THE DATE!

August 18: EMES Back to School Potluck @ 6PM

August 21: Middle/High School Back to School Bash @ 3PM

August 23: First day of 2016-17 school year

October 20-22 *The Pirates of Penzance* – high school musical

October 21-23: 2016 Homecoming Celebration

EMS Centennial Celebration: October 13-15, 2017



Paige Hutcheson and Shawna Hurst enter into their 5th Grade graduation with excitement. EMES matriculated 18 5th graders during their elementary graduation ceremony on June 2, 2016. We're excited that the majority of these students will be joining us at Main Campus as 6th graders in 2016-17!