

THE HARRINGTON HERALD

HARRINGTON SCHOOL ♦ 148 MAPLE STREET ♦ LEXINGTON, MA 02420 ♦ (781) 860-0012

David C. Crump, Principal ♦ Suzanne Cherson & Mary Ann Stewart, PTA co-Presidents

A Message from the Superintendent

Paul Ash

On November 29, School Committee Chairman Tom Diaz told the Special Town Meeting that our nation, our state, and the Lexington Public Schools are facing a greater demand for special education funding. Medical science is saving young lives, and:

- Many survivors are medically and educationally challenged.
- Local school districts are obligated to pay all special education costs with inadequate state and federal aid.
- Special education needs cannot be accurately predicted since students move in and out of district and their educational needs change.

The School Committee requested that the Special Town Meeting appropriate an additional \$834,000 to cover the projected deficit in special education. Since March 2006, the projected 2006-2007 cost

for out-of-district special education has increased by one

million dollars. There have been 32 changes in placements since March: 10 of these were new out-of-district students (4 students moved in from out of state and went directly to out-of-district schools, 1 moved in from another Massachusetts school system and 5 Lexington students needed to go out-of-district for educational reasons). Even though we added \$260,000 in contingency funds to the FY 07 school budget for new out of district placements, this was not sufficient to cover these new costs.

I am very pleased that the Special Town Meet

Continued on page 2

During the past 15 years, the statewide cost of regular education has increased by 88.7%. The cost of special education has increased by 156.2%.

A Message from PTA Co-President

Suzanne Cherson

Happy New Year! Last spring, I participated in the first **Open Circle Parent Training Group** at Harrington and found it gratifying to meet with other parents, share our thoughts and concerns, and have them responded to. I recently had the opportunity to interview Amy Chamberlain, our school counselor who runs the parent group, to find out more about her job.

Continued on page 3

Upcoming Events January



- 1 **No school** – New Years' Day
- 2 School Resumes
- 4 METCO Family Friends Day
- 11 Hobby Night (7:00-8:30pm)
- 12 PTA Morning Coffee with Amy Chamberlain (8:15am)
- 15 **No school** – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

A Message from the Assistant Principal

Mary G. Turo

Happy New Year! The beginning of another new year leads many of us to evaluate the past year and to make plans for the coming year. As I look back on my first few months at Harrington many things come to mind. I feel very fortunate to be here. I have had the opportunity to work in many different schools, and none of them can compare to Harrington. It is truly a very special

Continued on page 2

ing approved the School Committee's request for the additional \$834,000. Now that we have these funds, we will not have to adversely impact regular education and maintenance programs; however, our budget will still remain very tight for the remainder of the year.

Here are some important statistics:

- Lexington's special education costs, as a percentage of total costs, are typical for surrounding communities.
- During the past 15 years, the statewide percentage of school budgets allocated to special education has increased from 17% to just under 22%.
- During the past 15 years, the statewide cost of regular education has increased by 88.7%. The cost of special education has increased by 156.2%.
- For 29% of communities in Massachusetts (including Lexington), the increased cost of special education has been greater than all new state aid since 1993.

Although Lexington cannot stop state and national trends, there is much we can do. First, we must remain committed to educating all students at the highest possible standards. Second, we must continue to develop more in-house programs that will permit us to reduce out-of-district placements. And third, we must continue to improve regular education supports that will permit more students to thrive in regular education.

As an example of what we can do, on November 28 the administration presented to the School Committee three new special education programs that we expect will avoid \$865,000 in costs next year. Two programs will better serve middle and high school students with autism. We also requested funds to expand the high school Multidisciplinary Support Team (formerly AIM program). I want to thank Liz Billings-Fouhy, Jim Russo, Maura Johnson, Denise Oldham, Kathy Meagher, Barbara Bennett-Fortier, and Mary Sullivan Kelley for developing these programs and writing a comprehensive report for the community. I hope you have a chance to read this outstanding report (<http://lps.lexingtonma.org/SPED.html>).

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

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Public Education: Change, Progress, or more of the same PTA Minutes

November 15, 2006

Mary Ann Stewart, co-president of the Harrington PTA introduced the evening's speakers: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent of the Lexington Public Schools; Jay Kaufman, Member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives; and Meg Ansara, Director of the Massachusetts Stand for Children.

Representative Kaufman indicated that Massachusetts was at an exciting moment in history with a possibility of thinking in a new direction about public education. The recommendations that he would make to the governor would be as follows:

- He would like to see Deval Patrick committed to launching a real conversation about the role and mission of public education.
- Rep. Kaufman would like to see Deval Patrick appoint a secretary of learning. There is no current senior administration in charge of education – nobody charged with the "big picture".

Continued on page 4

A Message from the Assistant Principal, cont'd from page 1

place to work and learn. If you haven't experienced as many elementary schools as I have, you might not realize how truly fortunate we are. Thank you all for the warm welcome and your patience as I continue to discover the many unique qualities that make our school so special.

Mary G. Turo, Asst. Principal/Grade 4 Teacher

Harrington School

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How would you describe your role at Harrington?

My role as school counselor is primarily to enhance the social and emotional development of students, relative to how it promotes their learning. This involves helping children understand how they feel about themselves as learners and social beings, how to feel capable and how to develop resiliency.

How do you deliver these services?

Individual Counseling – A child is usually referred by teachers, parents or is self-referred. I will work with that child anywhere from once or twice to once per week, depending on the need. Problems can range from mild to severe.

Social Skills Groups – Ongoing groups are offered at several grade levels. I also provide informal “lunch bunches” with students in my office.

Classroom Guidance – I work with an entire classroom on a particular social, emotional, or learning issue that needs attention.

Parent Guidance – I consult to parents when they have such questions as: Is what I'm seeing normal development or something more, how can I help my child better cope with learning challenges, or how can homework time go more smoothly at home?

Child Study Team – This involves coming together with teachers and specialists to discuss a child's progress, strategize and determine appropriate resources and interventions to assist the child.

Special Education Evaluation Team – Part of a child's evaluation involves a developmental history, which is written information provided by parents and reviewed with me in my office. I also offer parent guidance during this process and aim to build working relationships with parents.

K-8 Guidance Chairperson – I represent Lexington public school elementary and middle school counselors, serving as a liaison between counselors and LPS administration. I report to David Crump as well as to Mary Sullivan Kelley, the Director of Student Services.

Open Circle – My role is the “go to,” in-house person for this social competency program. This involves serving as a resource for teachers, co-leading Open Circles in the classroom, and leading parent workshops.



What is the Open Circle Parent Training Group?

This program provides parents with the opportunity to learn what their children are learning and to apply the principles and language at home. They benefit from sharing with other parents, seeing things from the perspective of the child, and developing a framework for ground rules. I am excited to have as many Harrington parents as possible participate in the Parent Groups!

What are some specific skills that parents and children can learn from Open Circle?

Parent comments from evaluations include such things as learning how to better listen to and problem solve with their children. Children learn how to include others, give compliments, be more aware of and manage feelings, assert themselves and problem solve. Open Circle provides language such as the “school listening look”, “Double D behaviors” and “non-negotiables.”

Please tell us more about you.

I've been a resident of Lexington for 27 years. My husband and I have two children who both went through the Lexington school system. I'm now in my 14th year at Harrington. Before that, I worked in training and development in the corporate world, as well as working as a school psychologist in various school systems. I was also a stay-at-home mom for several years. I received my B.A. in Psychology from Binghamton University, and my Masters in School Psychology from St. Lawrence University. I am a licensed Educational Psychologist and am certified as both a school psychologist and school counselor.

What are your hobbies?

I'm an avid tennis player. I also like to read, cook, garden and walk my four-year-old black lab, Parker.

Please note:

The Harrington PTA will have Amy Chamberlain as our guest on Friday, January 12th at 8:15 am for an informal discussion about Open Circle and other related topics. Look elsewhere in this issue for info about the PTA coffee and to sign up for the next Open Circle Parent Training Group. ☺

- Rep. Kaufman would like the board of education dissolved. There are no parents of public school children on the board. There are many controversial ideas that we should be discussing. What do we mean by "high standards" in education? There is nothing more antithetical to good education than "one size fits all" MCAS has served as a good "quality control" mechanism that has served some schools well. However, we need to be more creative about how we raise standards for all kids.
- Rep. Kaufman also noted that we need a feedback mechanism for MCAS and for faculty – currently ½ of all teachers leave within 5 years of beginning teaching. Teachers need power and incentives.
- Rep. Kaufman also indicated that the new governor would need to make changes to the education budget. A budget is a statement of our values. Based on that, he believes that the governor should allocate
 - more money for special education.
 - money to all day kindergarten;
 - funding to METCO, which has been grossly under funded for 20 years.
 - Money to charter schools – there is a need to change the funding formula as right now any money spent on charter schools comes out of the public education budget.
 - Experimentation – children need to stretch & make mistakes and the same is true for schools. Money should be allocated for this type of experimentation by individual schools.

Dr. Paul Ash was the next speaker. On the philosophical side, Dr. Ash referenced John Adams, who wrote in The Massachusetts Constitution that it was the duty of communities to cherish education and that the survival of the state depended on a strong public education. It is the duty of community to fund education. Because of this, Proposition 2 ½ was a failure. Dr. Ash noted that it is in our self-interest to have a highly educated population who will fill jobs and make our economy thrive. Also, the schools should teach an understanding of cultures and bring people together to have a better life. Right now there are not enough highly educated people to fill technological positions. Massachusetts has turned its back on the public schools.

As for practical issues, Dr. Ash also agreed that the Board of Education should be eliminated. The federal government needs to fund its mandate created by the "No Child Left Behind" Act. The special education laws are barely funded. Dr. Ash stated that it is highly intrusive to institute local control over the schools unless it is highly funded. Dr. Ash also noted the need for development of strong leadership in the schools. Right now there is a huge turnover in superintendent and principal positions.

Dr. Ash addressed the issue of funding a public school education. The amount of money going into special education exceeds the money coming in from the state. (See the message from the Superintendent on page 1 of this issue).

Meg Ansara was the next speaker. Ms. Ansara stated that she hoped that Deval Patrick would be the champion for education that we have not had. Massachusetts has great opportunity and tremendous resources, but we are still in the middle of the pack when it comes to education. We should be leading the rest of the country.

Ms. Ansara stated that one of the key components to this would be early education. There needs to be quality access for all young children.

Ms. Ansara also emphasized the need for teacher quality and support. Right now there is a high turnover of teachers. The first couple of years of teaching are overwhelming. Teachers need to be encouraged to stay through better pay, more preparation, time, and more mentoring/support. Ms. Ansara also emphasized the importance of health and wellness in schools. Schools must emphasize healthy buildings, food/nutrition and safety, as well as support for children around mental health issues.

Ms. Ansara discussed the issue of funding. The property tax is not our solution and we need to be creative in finding alternative funding sources. We also need parents and community members to be agitators on the outside to promote change inside.

Following Ms. Ansara's comments, the floor was opened for questions and comments. The following are some of the comments and questions:

Q: What about education technology?

Massachusetts is missing an opportunity to take advantage of technology. Lexington has laid off computer teachers. We need to keep teachers excited and use creative ways to incorporate

technology into the classrooms. Teachers have not been trained or allowed to have enough input into the way that computers are used in the classroom.

Q: What can parents do in Lexington to support education?

Dr. Ash answered that parents can commit themselves to being partners to the teachers/principals. At the local level, parents can get involved in the PTA and other advocacy/political groups. Also, support the LEF (Lexington Education Foundation) which provides grants to schools and teachers.

Q: Will all-day kindergarten become a reality in Lexington?

Rep. Kaufman noted that Deval Patrick has emphasized funding for all-day kindergarten as a priority for the state. However, it is more likely that priority in funding will be given to low income communities that have a higher need for all day kindergarten. Dr. Ash noted that there is not enough money in the budget to fund all day kindergarten at this point – though it will hopefully occur at some point. Better funding is needed from the state.

Q: What should the funding level be and how should the schools be funded?

All of the speakers emphasized again that we cannot depend on private sources for funding, that we need predictable state/federal funding source that keeps up with state mandates – there is a gap between funding levels and the requirements of the state.

There was also a discussion about the recent elimination of the elementary Spanish language program after the failed override vote and the concern about the impact of this given our increasingly diverse population. Although some felt that this loss, or similar cutbacks in education, could be mitigated by parents providing private services/lessons to their children, others felt that this could not compensate for the provision of such services in the schools.

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne Bruno



Please join the Harrington PTA
for a coffee

Friday, January 12, 2007

8:15 – 9:30 am

Harrington School Art Room

Our guest is Mrs. Amy Chamberlain,
Harrington School Counselor

All are welcome to our first PTA event of 2007!
We'll have some time to socialize, wish each other a
Happy New Year and learn more about what's
going on with Open Circle and other programs here
at Harrington. This is an informal discussion with
plenty of opportunity for lots of questions!

Box Tops

Lets get the new year of 2007 off to a great Box Top Start! The kids have been wonderful at remembering to bring in at least 5 box tops on Tuesday mornings to get a small prize. We see familiar faces almost weekly. Keep on clipping and saving!

Don't forget you can always go online to www.boxtops4education.com and become a box top booster and get great coupons via email for your box top products. Also can shop online through this site and Harrington gets 3-8 % of your total purchases (at no additional cost to you).

Any questions? Feel free to contact your Box Top Team: Ellen Cameron eusol@aol.com or Suzanne Lowry

School Committee Update

Mary Ann Stewart, School Committee Liaison

At Tuesday's December 12 meeting, the School Committee was presented with the Master Renovation Plan.

- The Plan, which is based on enrollment projections that indicate a continued decline in K-5 student enrollment, considers the "optimal educational capacity" for each of the remaining elementary schools to be renovated.
- Based on projections, the closure of one elementary school seems likely.
- The administration is also in the process of developing a five-year capital planned review of the K-12 and Central Office administrative building. Old Harrington is being strongly considered as the new home for Central Administration, which will require electrical and other updates.

The December 19 agenda included a presentation on the WGPA from Dr. Michael Jones, principal of LHS, and Carol Pilarski, Assistant to the Superintendent.

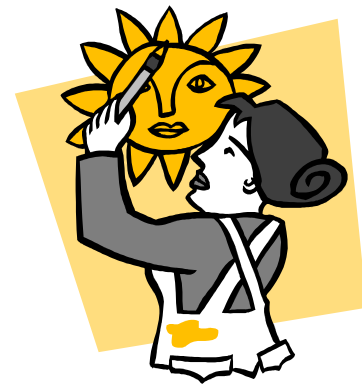
- The process of phasing out and eliminating the WGPA has been underway for more than twenty months and has the unanimous support of teachers and staff at LHS, as well as the Student Senate.
- The administration addressed the recommendations of the faculty study committee on WGPA and, together with faculty representatives, presented the High School's initiative in establishing school-wide standards and measurements of performance.

The School Committee convened a public hearing on Wednesday, December 13 concerning the Redistricting Recommendation for the 2007-2008 academic year.

- The Redistricting Committee, which includes two representatives from each of the six elementary schools, two from the School Committee, and the Superintendent, is still in the process of reviewing criteria for final determination and will make its final presentation to the School Committee soon.
- Enrollment projections, which figure significantly in the redistricting process, and the dates for public hearings, may be viewed on-line: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org>

Tuesday, January 16, 2007, Dr. Ash will present his FY08 budget to the School Committee in the Town Hall Selectmen's Meeting Room at 7:30 PM. Meetings are broadcast live via community cable access (LexMedia) or come in person.

Remember to bookmark and check the LPS website often for updates and announcements concerning our schools:
<http://lps.lexingtonma.org>. Send any comments to our School Committee members via the link from the Harrington School website:
<http://harrington.lexingtonma.org>



Help Wanted

The Harrington Mural Project Team is actively searching for an experienced muralist to lead the artistic design and painting of the first of two wall murals to adorn the hallways of Harrington. This person should have experience working with elementary age children as well as experience in mural design. Please e-mail Doreen Mitchell at pdmitchell@rcn.com with names of qualified candidates. Thank you!

NEW HARRINGTON JUBILEE WEBSITE

<http://harrington50thanniversary.com>



Happy Birthday to Harrington! In case you haven't heard, Harrington School turns 50 years old this year. If you are a Harrington Alumnus(a) or know someone who is, please consider submitting stories and old photos for the Harrington Anniversary Jubilee Commemorative Book! You can submit all of your Harrington information on our new Harrington Jubilee website: <http://harrington50thanniversary.com>.

Keep your eyes open for more Jubilee events and join the celebration. Remember, Harrington School will only turn 50 years old once!

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY EVENT



Please bring your family and friends to the Fourteenth Annual Commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day on **Sunday, January 14, 2007 at 2pm** in Lexington, Massachusetts. Admission is free and all are welcome.

The commemoration begins at 2pm with the traditional Unity Walk from the Lexington Battle Green to Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue. The program will begin after the Unity Walk at 2:15pm. Participants are invited to join the walk and/or attend the program at Cary Hall. The theme of the program is an educational perspective of African American history, in direct connection with the ancestral history of Lexington town resident, Charlie Martin.

Mr. Martin will be delivering the keynote address: "Researching Black History to Find My Family History." Mr. Martin is a 41-year resident of Lexington, a retired engineer, a self-employed consultant, a genealogist and a history buff. He is also a member of the Board of Trustees of the

Lexington METCO Scholarship Fund, the Diversity Task Force for the Lexington Public Schools, and Lexington's No Place for Hate Steering Committee.

In addition to the keynote address, the program will highlight Lexington's METCO program, which is celebrating its 40th Anniversary in the town. Lexington METCO Director Cheryl Prescott-Walden will make an address, along with former and current METCO program participants, who will share their perspectives on the program and its relation to Dr. King's legacy.

Music performances by Lexington Public School students will add to the joyful commemoration ceremony.

Light refreshments will be served following the program. All are encouraged to join their neighbors and friends as they reflect upon the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

For more information, please contact Sam Zales, szales@buyerzone.com.

LEXINGTON SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

Topic: "Literacy Instruction for Children with Special Needs in the Lexington Public Schools"

Time: Thursday, January 4th, 7:30pm

Location: LHS Library Media Center, room 147.

Speakers: Dr. Lynne Sarasin, Deputy Superintendent for

Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, Dr. **Stephanie Grimaldi**, Elementary Reading Specialist, and Dr. **Mary Sullivan Kelley**, Director of Student Services. Following the hour-long presentation, there will be time for networking with other parents. For any questions or a need for accommodations, please contact the PAC co-chairs, Larry Belvin or Dale Hernquist.

HARRINGTON SCHOOL 50TH JUBILEE SPRING FAIR 2007

**Sunday, June 3, 2007
12 noon to 4:00pm**

New & Old Attractions:

*Cake Decorating Contest

*Cake Walk

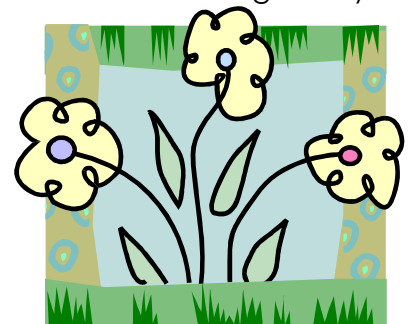
*Food / Games / Prizes

*Free Red Sox Raffle

*Surprise Guest

Anyone interested in being a part of our planning team and committee, please email Michelle Mabardy: MMMabardy@aol.com OR Ellyn Rossi:

elregero@aol.com. We look forward to hearing from you!



HARRINGTON SCHOOL CALENDAR

January – June 2007

JANUARY

- 1/1 No school – New Years' Day
- 1/2 School Resumes
- 1/4 METCO Family Friends Day
- 1/11 Hobby Night (7:00-8:30 pm)
- 1/12 PTA Morning Coffee with Amy Chamberlain (8:15 am)
- 1/15 No school – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

FEBRUARY

- 2/1 METCO Family Friends Day
- 2/6 Gr. K and 1 concert: 8:30 am performance for school; 7:00 pm performance for parents
- 2/8 Family Dance (6:30 – 8:00 pm)
- 2/13 Community Read Aloud
- 2/19-2/23 **No school** – February Vacation
- 2/26 School Resumes
- 2/27 PTA Morning Coffee with Kate Cremens-Basbas and Liz Weiss (8:15 am)

MARCH

- 3/1 METCO Family Friends Day
- 3/2 Tony Vacca's World Rhythms Concert, with internationally acclaimed Senagalese tama "talking" drum player Massamba Diop and featuring Harrington 4th and 5th graders (7:00 pm)
- 3/8 Bingo Night (6:30 – 8:30 pm)
- 3/14 Grades 2 and 3 concert: 8:30 am performance for school; 7:00pm performance for parents
- 3/16 Talent Show (6:45 – 9:00 pm)
- 3/22 PTA Meeting (7:00-8:30 pm): What ALL Families Need to Know About Special Education
- 3/29 Science Fair (7:00 – 8:15 pm)

APRIL

- 4/4 Teacher Conferences (1/2 day; 11:45 am dismissal)

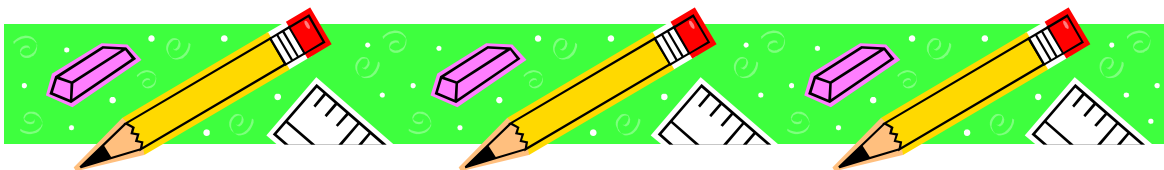
- 4/5 Teacher Conferences (Thursday, 11:45am dismissal)
- 4/5 METCO Family Friends Day
- 4/6 **No School** – Good Friday
- 4/11 Teacher Conferences (1/2 day; 11:45 am dismissal)
- 4/12 Teacher Conferences (Thursday; 11:45am dismissal)
- 4/12 HED Show for parents (5:30pm)
- 4/13 HED Show for school (1:00pm)
- 4/16 Patriot's Day Parade: Harrington's 50th Anniversary Jubilee Celebration Float
- 4/16-4/20 **No school** – April Vacation
- 4/23 School Resumes
- 4/26 PTA Meeting (7:00-8:30pm): Everyday Mathematics Workshop

MAY

- 5/3 Grades 4 and 5 concert: 8:30am performance for school; 7:30 pm performance for parents
- 5/7-5/11 Teacher Appreciation Week
- 5/10 Teachers' Luncheon (12:15pm)
- 5/10 METCO Family Friends Day
- 5/17 PTA Annual Meeting and Elections (7:00-8:30 pm)
- 5/28 **No school** – Memorial Day

JUNE

- 6/3 Spring Fair (12:00-4:00pm)
- 6/7 METCO Family Friends Day
- 6/8 Annual METCO Year End Celebration: Time and Location TBA
- 6/16 Jubilee Picnic and Commemorative Book Release Party (3:00 – 7:00)
- 6/18 Volunteer Tea/Coffee (8:15am)
- 6/20 Last day of school if no snow days (dismissal: 11:45am)





Our Heartfelt Thanks to ...

... Fifth grade parent, **Rebecca Winters** for framing and mounting four seasonal multicultural art boards on the blue wall across from the Art Room. Families and individuals created the tiles for the boards which express family heritage and seasonal and religious celebrations, among others.

... Fourth and Fifth grade students, and their families who supported their vocal and instrumental musical efforts, for an inspired and moving "Peace Concert".

... our fantastic Fourth and Fifth grade teachers (**Ms. Sanroma, Mrs. Turo, Mrs. Josiassen, Ms. Peterson, Mrs. Class, Mrs. Hussey, and Mr. J.**) who not only shepherded their classes to timely entrances and exits, but enabled several of their students' efforts to create poems, haiku, and other expressions of their thoughts on peace for the "Peace Concert."

... our string and wind instrumental instructors, but especially to **Mrs. Stumpf** for her collaborative efforts and commitment to providing enriching musical experiences through the Orff Percussion and Dance Ensembles for our children.

... and especially to all of **You** – families, teachers, and staff – who continue to make the work of Harrington PTA a particularly relevant and enjoyable experience for our shared community. The Executive Committee extends our best wishes for a happy and healthy year in 2007!

The Harrington Herald

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The Harrington Herald is the monthly newsletter of the Harrington PTA, published ten times a year. Newsletter material may be emailed as a Word, plain text, or rich text format attachment to donghua9901@yahoo.com. If you cannot email your submission, please call or email Beth to make other arrangements for delivery.

In keeping with the PTA Newsletter Policy, the *Herald* will print items directly related to the schools and their PTA's. This includes curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities that are PTA- or system-supported, and school-sanctioned projects. All articles are subject to editorial discretion.

Visit the Harrington School Web Site at <http://harrington.lexingtonma.org>.

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Next Deadline: January 20, 2007