

THE HARRINGTON HERALD

Harrington School • 328 Lowell Street • Lexington, MA 02420 • (781) 860-0012

Elaine Mead, Principal • Suzanne Kouri & Suzanne Bruno, PTA Presidents



A Message from the Principal

Elaine Mead, emead@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

We continue our work to create a safe and positive school climate in March. In January and February, we have talked about rights and responsibilities within a context of caring about others and ourselves. This month, teachers are using Open Circle meetings in the classroom to promote anti-bullying messages. Lessons on friendship and showing respect will be highlighted. As a result of an LEF grant we were able to purchase books for classrooms and our library. All kindergarten and grade one classrooms will discuss the book, The Bully Blockers Club, by Teresa Bateman. Students in grades two and three will share Just Kidding by Trudy Ludwig. Grade four and five will discuss the role of the bystander as well as issues of cyber bullying.

The "Power of One" assembly in February reminded us that we all make a difference in our goal of making Harrington a caring school community for everyone. In the book, Say Something by Peggy Moss, students and parents are encouraged to speak up when they see bullying behavior. The author shares a quote by a civil rights attorney in the endnotes of the book "One person speaking up makes more noise than a thousand people who remain silent." Kidding around and teasing that puts down another person is hurtful. Gossiping and exclusion creates an emotionally unsafe environment. When we see this, we have opportunity to act and to promote learning.

Many times these behaviors can go unnoticed by school staff unless students or parents speak up. Teachers will be setting up "problem boxes" in the classroom to give students a way to submit a problem or report something that they feel needs adult attention. If your child tells you about an unkind situation at school, we hope you will help us respond by sharing what you observe. The idea that "kids will by kids" is no longer widely accepted. Instead, we actively look for opportunities to teach our children what to do if they are

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A Message from the PTA

Julie Read, julie.read1@verizon.net

As I begin this writing, there is no snow to speak of on the ground. So as PTA Treasurer I thought that instead of crunching through some new snow, we can crunch through some numbers together!

At this point in the year the Harrington PTA has already held many of our planned fundraisers. We had a successful PTA membership drive

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March

- 2 Harrington Reads (Gr 4 & 5) 7:00- 8:00pm
- 4 3rd & 4th Grade concert for School – 9:00am
- 4 3rd & 4th Grade concert for School – 7:00pm
- 4 METCO Family Friends Day
- 9 Family Math Night – Grade 2 - 6:45pm – 8pm
- 11 All-town Kindergarten Orientation Evening
- 11 Student-Adult Dialog (Gr 5, 6 & 7) 7 - 8:30pm
- 16 Science Fair -- 7:00pm-- 8:30pm
- 16 School Council Meeting 7:30am – 8:30am
- 17 **Early Dismissal - 12:15 pm**, Conference Day
- 18 Conference Day – Regular Dismissal - 12:15pm
- 19 PTA Meeting - Morning Coffee - 9:15-10:30
- 23 Kindergarten Math Night, 6:30pm—7:30pm
- 23 MCAS - Grade 4 Long Composition
- 24 MCAS - Grade 3 ELA Session 1
- 24 **Early Dismissal - 12:15 pm**, Conference Day
- 25 Conference Day - Regular Dismissal - 12:15 pm
- 25 MCAS - Grade 3 ELA Session 2
- 26 MCAS - Grade 4 ELA Session 1
- 27 LEF Celebration 6:30pm - midnight
- 29 MCAS - Make-up day
- 30 MCAS - Make-up day
- 31 MCAS - Grade 4 ELA Session 2



April

- 1 MCAS - Make-up day
- 2 **No School** – Good Friday Holiday
- 5 MCAS - Make-up day
- 6 MCAS - Grade 5 ELA Session 1
- 7 MCAS - Grade 5 ELA Session 2
- 7 MCAS - Grade 4 Long Compos. make-up day
- 8 MCAS - Make-up day
- 9 MCAS - Make-up day

Principal's Message, continued...

the targets of bullying behavior. Students who use power to solve problems are taught the impact of their behavior and are given alternative ways to get their needs met. Bully prevention techniques are important and like other skills need to be taught and practiced.

The library has added several new titles in a special "anti-bullying" section. These books will be available for circulation after April vacation. During March and early April, classroom teachers will share these with their classrooms to raise awareness and promote positive action when confronting teasing and bullying behavior. The books that have been added to our library are:

- King of the Playground by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
- My Secret Bully by Trudy Ludwig
- Nobody Knew What To Do by Becky Ray McCain
- Say Something by Peggy Moss
- Sorry by Trudy Ludwig
- The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill
- Trouble Talk by Trudy Ludwig

Here at Harrington, students, staff, and parents are standing up and speaking up. Together we can learn bully prevention techniques that work. With adult encouragement and support, students make positive choices and solve problems with respect. Thank you for your help in this effort. If you are aware of a situation and are not sure what to do, please call on Amy Chamberlain, school guidance counselor, Grant Smith, assistant principal or me. Please know that we are here to help. I welcome your feedback and suggestions.

PTA Message, continued...

with additional donations that added up to almost \$7200! Our fall fundraisers "Walk for the Arts" and "Meadow Farms" brought in approximately \$6200. This exceeded our projected profits by about \$1200 and as we all know in this economy, every penny counts. There are other programs and events that also help to raise funds. For example, "School and Family Picture Day", "Wilson Farm Thanksgiving Pie Sale", and "Barnes & Noble Night" helped to raise close to \$2300. Ongoing programs that make money for our school include Box Tops and the Harrington Store. I'd like to thank all of the parents, students, teachers and

staff that help out with these events by giving of themselves and their time. All of these fundraisers, programs and events make it possible to fund the PTA programs that make Harrington a special place to learn for all of our children.

Now, how does the money get spent? Here are the numbers for the big budget items. The ACT, Science Enrichment and BBY programs that are so important in supplementing the curriculum (and are a lot of fun for the children!) are budgeted for \$11,300. Discretionary funds that the Principal, Vice Principal, teachers and staff can spend to enhance their classrooms and curriculum come in at \$7500. Field trip buses add another \$3,000. School supplies are allotted \$4000. The School Council has \$1500 to give out as grants. Administrative costs, communication costs (such as our beloved Herald), socials to thank our teachers and volunteers, and community events like "International Food Night" are all funded by the PTA.

We hope that you will agree that our budget reflects our mission to enhance the lives of the entire Harrington Community in making this the best place to learn and work and have fun at the same time.

As always suggestions and questions about the PTA and specifically the budget are welcome. In fact, we will be working on fiscal year 2010-11 so please let us know your thoughts.



January PTA Minutes

Claire Sheth, clairebsheth@yahoo.com

The PTA morning coffee discussion on January 22nd was an opportunity for parents and caregivers to learn more about the state's MCAS exams, which are administered to students throughout Massachusetts in the 3rd through 10th grades. Principal Elaine Mead and Vice Principal Grant Smith were on-hand to answer questions posed by the group as well as demonstrate, through the magic of audio visual aids, the information and resources available through the MCAS section of the Massachusetts Department of Education website-- <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/>

Questions ranged from the logistical: "what is the testing schedule?"; to the more substantive: "What do I do if my child just doesn't test well?". Intrinsic to the discussion, however, was the reality that Harrington students and Lexington school children in general perform very well on these exams.

From a logistics standpoint, the schedule for this year's testing can be found on the MCAS schedule page of the Harrington website—<http://harrington.lexingtonma.org/2009-10MCASSchedule.pdf>. English Language Arts testing for the 3rd and 4th grades will take place during the week of March 22nd and March 29th. English Language Arts testing for 5th graders will take place during the week of April 5th. Harrington has 100% participation and the tests are largely untimed; while special accommodations are made for children with Individual Education Plans (IEPs). In the event that a student finishes early, they are asked to have a book on hand so they can read quietly. Once there is a critical number of students in a given class who have completed the test, the students who are still working are taken to a new location where they will work until they are finished with the test.

Our discussion then moved more toward content of, and preparation for the tests. Extensive examples of actual test questions are available through the DOE website. The site does not, however, make public full exams as doing so would require new test development each year. Instead, they release some questions and keep others secure so that they can be used on future years' exams. To find examples of questions from past years, go to the following link: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html>. Also available are examples of student responses and how they measure up against the scoring rubric. To access those examples, go to: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/>.

Generally speaking, Harrington does very well on the standardized questions, but less well on the "open response" questions, though our results in this area are consistent across the state. Given this trend, test developers are including shorter open response questions in this year's MCAS release.

It is also important to note that schools are now being measured according to a Growth Performance Rating (GPR), a measure against which Harrington has had some notable success. The GPR measures/compares underperforming student results from one year to the next to measure individual improvement. This measure is particularly relevant for our IEP and English-as-a-Second-Language students.

When asked, "Are their things parents can/should be doing to help their children prepare, the short answer is to de-emphasize the tests

in conversations with our children—particularly in the elementary years, as the test is truly a measure of the schools' success—not the individual child's. Parents aren't encouraged to introduce the topic, but should be prepared with a response to your children if questions about MCAS come up.

It is rare for there to be a disconnect between a student's progress in the classroom and their performance on the MCAS. If your child is hitting benchmarks in class, s/he will do fine on MCAS, though there is always the possibility of a bad day—we've all had them! And, as Principal Mead said, "know your kid"—if your child always rushes through assignments, reinforce the importance of taking their time. On the other hand, if your child perseverates, encourage them not to stress or worry about performing "perfectly." Ultimately, kids that read and write a great deal voluntarily and who have good attention spans will perform better.

For parents of children that consistently struggle with standardized tests, look at your child's results with an eye toward root causes: are they rushing through the exam and therefore skipping questions?; Do they truly not understand the material?; Do they have poor executive functioning skills? By understanding your child and their experience of the test you can better advocate should special accommodations be required. Something called a 504 plan exists which makes it possible for test accommodation even though a child does not require a formal IEP. It is important to note that qualification for a 504 has to be deemed necessary for all testing scenarios, not just the MCAS.

Whatever your specific questions about the MCAS, rest-assured that the Harrington administrators and faculty are cognizant of the significance of these exams, while at the same time putting them within their proper context as a small part of an overall academic plan for our children. For more specific information regarding Harrington results and relative performance within the state, visit the DOE website and see you on testing day!



School Committee Update

Lisa Smith, lisa.lavinia.smith@gmail.com

The School Committee Meeting on January 5th opened with the **Superintendent's Announcements**. Dr. Ash shared a chain of events that had occurred dealing with the robbery in Waltham. Dr. Ash wanted to reassure the public that a system is in place to ensure the safety of our children while at school. Dr. Ash continued further to say that we need to improve our communication systems within the public schools. Dr. Ash had met with all the principals of the public schools to discuss communication to include cell phone numbers, work numbers and e-mail addresses. Dr. Ash reported that the short term goal is to make the global connect system operational.

Next on the agenda was **Member Reports and Concerns**. Mary Ann Stewart announced she would be available to the public on January 14th at Rude Awakening from 8:30 - 9:30am. Jessie Steigerwald continued next to bring to the public's attention that the School Committee needs office hours (such as the Selectmen have). She would like to start with once a month.

The first main item up for discussion on the agenda was the **FY-11 Level Service Budget** presented by Dr. Ash. Dr. Ash reported that ultimately, the school budgets are about the children. The funds for the budget generally come from grants, fees and donations. Dr. Ash links the money back to the School Committee goals and the district wide goals for the town. Lexington's core purpose is to have excellent schools and to have academic excellence for all students. The School Committee is committed to continuous improvement and there is always room for improvement. When putting together the budget, Dr. Ash explained that there are budget guidelines. Most importantly, the School Committee looks for ways to save the town money. The good news is that there are sufficient funds to maintain level services in Lexington's schools. Compared to last year's budget of \$66,958,293 this year Dr. Ash is looking at \$68,832,442 which is a 2.8% increase. This is only appropriated money and does not include other money from athletics, donations or the like. This number also does not include federal stimulus money which the town will receive next year in an amount of \$818,090.

These dollars will allow our public schools to keep our systems moving forward. Some key areas to focus on will include: not increasing the

fee for the 3rd year of full day Kindergarten (and with a 1/2 day option), continue development of tiered instructional intervention for K-12, develop a new standard-based K-5 report card (which will be implemented in 2012), continue to improve professional development with data driven instruction, ELL training for teachers and focused after school courses for educators that are based on district goals and further expansion of in-district Special Education programs.

Some of the major changes the School Committee will be facing with the projected budget are with regard to: salaries and wages, lane changes and step increases; the Special Education tuition (a loss of \$600,000 in state aid for Special Education--however, their transportation can be reduced by \$322,153); and regular transportation may increase by \$97,000.

The top four challenges the School Committee will meet with the budget are: 1) meeting federal, state and local revenue challenges; meeting all collective bargaining obligations; funding required Special Education services adequately; and providing effective education for all students.

The next discussion item was the **"Four - and Ten - Year Enrollment Forecast Report"** by Dr. Ash. This report will be available on the School Committee website. Dr. Ash reported that the overall population in Lexington is not changing. And while the high school is overcrowded, the enrollment is stable. In Dr. Ash's opinion, enrollment will decline enough to close an elementary school, but this will happen many years away. Dr. Ash also reported that the middle school enrollments will begin to come down. Clarke and Diamond have a projected similar enrollment in the next five years. Dr. Ash continued to report that enrollment in our town schools will continue to decline over the next four years. The need for teachers will therefore decline.

The last discussion item was the **"Race to the Top Funds"**. This is a federal grant whereby Lexington could potentially see \$27,000/year. Dr. Ash said he was not going to sign the memorandum of understanding since there are many strings attached, many forms to be filled out, meetings to go to and the grant needs to be constantly managed.

The one Action Item of the evening was a "Vote on First Reading and Authorization to Temporarily Implement the **New Meal Charge Policy**". It was reported that there needs to be a

temporary policy from the School Committee in order for the meal plan to implement new policies to put notifications out to parents and to maintain other policies and regulations. The School Committee can revise the policy at a later date. A motion was made and all were in favor of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00pm when the School Committee went into Executive Session.



Spring Fair 2010: A Harrington Tradition

Kim Goldinger, kimgoldinger@alum.mit.edu

Claudia Lavin, clavinrdz@gmail.com

Four years ago our families attended our first Spring Fair at Harrington. Although we were brand new to the Harrington community at the time, we immediately felt the warmth from the friendly faces and the happy kids that greeted us. Once inside, we were impressed and excited to see the level of effort that parents, teachers, administrators, and volunteers expended to ensure that the Harrington Spring Fair was top notch. It was immediately obvious that this was a school we were excited to be a part of, one that shares so freely of itself and one that puts so much effort into creating an event that not only raises funds to provide wonderful programs for our children, but that builds a sense of community and spirit.

Our Harrington Spring Fair is the flagship community building event for our school. We are excited to have so many new faces this year, and hope that old and new will come together at this year's Harrington Spring Fair 2010, so that our wonderful tradition will continue to flourish.

We are thrilled to be the Co-Chairs of this year's Fair, and are looking forward to enjoying this fantastic event with all of you. Please mark it on your calendar - **May 23rd!!!**

To become involved with the Fair, or to offer suggestions or other ideas, please call us at 617-285-5201 (Kim) or 781-652-9635 (Claudia)

LEXINGTON EDUCATION FOUNDATION (LEF)

Paula Antonevich, 781.372.3288

info@lexedfoundation.org

A Celebration for Education
Saturday, March 27, 2010, 6:30 – midnight
The Westin Waltham-Boston
70 Third Avenue, Waltham

6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Reception with Silent Auction & LHS Jazz Band

8:00 – midnight, Dinner & Dancing

Live Auction with Billy Costa

Music by Boston's premier classic rock band

"French Lick"

Please join us for Lexington Education Foundation's annual celebration and largest fundraiser. The LHS Jazz Combo will set the mood swinging during the reception and silent auction. The silent auction will feature items of all types and value. Dinner will start at 8:00 p.m., and before dessert is served, local radio personality Billy Costa will lead the live auction, encouraging a spirited bidding battle. With the festivities underway and excitement high, Boston's premier classic rock band, "French Lick" will take the stage with a song list rooted in classic rock you can dance to.

For more information about *A Celebration for Education* and to purchase tickets visit the LEF website <http://www.lexedfoundation.org>, or call 781-372-3288. For incentive to dust of your dancing shoes, check out French Lick's website <http://www.frenchlickband.com> or their most recent performance on YouTube!

Founded in 1989, the Lexington Education Foundation is an independent 501 (c)(3) charitable organization committed to enhancing educational excellence. Since its inception, LEF has awarded more than \$2.9 million to Lexington educators through our competitive grants program.

Adults, did you ever wish you could talk to your kids about what they really want and think?

And students, do you wonder the same thing about adults?

Come to the Town-wide 5th, 6th & 7th grade Student-Adult Dialogue Night and find out!

**LEXINGTON 5th, 6th, and 7th GRADE
STUDENT-ADULT DIALOGUE NIGHT
FOR ALL 5th, 6th and 7th GRADE STUDENTS & PARENTS**

“Listen To Me”

As our children transition through adolescence, they will be confronted with many positive and negative influences that will effect the decisions they make.

Substantial research indicates that adolescents

DO listen to their parents and **DO** make healthy choices when supported to do so.

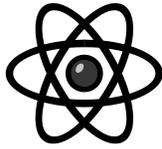
Dialogue Nights give students and adults the opportunity to discuss issues that directly affect youth and the adults who relate to them. “Listen To Me” will provide a positive, fun forum to help expand the conversations between 5th, 6th and 7th graders and the adults who relate to them. Finding someone to listen in a helpful manner is not an easy task for many of us. Please join us for a fun evening of activities and stimulating discussion on communication and the barriers to students and adults listening.

Date: Thursday, March 11, 2010

Time: 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. (Registration begins at 6:45 p.m.)

Place: Lexington High School Gym

A COLLABORATION OF THE LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOL PE & WELLNESS DEPARTMENT AND THE TOWN OF LEXINGTON HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT. FUNDED BY A CHNA 15 MINI GRANT. ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT JULIE FENN, LICSW AT 781-861-2320, OR AT JFENN@SCH.CLLEXINGTON.MA.US



CALLING ALL SCIENTISTS!

HARRINGTON SCIENCE FAIR ~ 2010

Tuesday, March 16th

@ 6:30pm - 7:30pm

Presenters & Observers Invited

Amazed by animals, aerospace, or anatomy?
 Batty about batteries, birds, bubbles, balls and ramps?
 Crazy about chemistry, circuits, or crystals?
 Fascinated by fossils or floatation?
 Great at graphs, gravity, or genetics?

SeAshlls, Plants, Tracking, Solid, Liquid & Gas
 Come join the SCIENCE fun!



Harrington School Science Fair ~ 2010

Name: _____ Grade: _____

Topic: _____

Set-up: ___half table ___electricity ___uses liquids

Please **drop off this form** in the box labeled Science Fair in the front lobby of school
 (this box will be in the PTA section of the lobby which is just to the right of the right-hand stairs).

Questions, contact Helen Goodreau 781-274-0204 or ehgood@aol.com



A Heartfelt Thanks . . .

... to **Joanne Kaye** and **Beth Gaudette** for orchestrating an outstanding Bingo Night that raised \$826.00 and provided community fun for 201 people!

... to **Suzanne Kouri** , **Julie Vincent**, **Sheri Foreman**, **Principal Mead**, **Assistant Principal Smith**, **Ms. Wojack**, **Mrs. O'Neill**, **Ms. Yardley**, **Ms. Tempesta**, **Ms. Rogerson**, and **Mrs. Archibald** for their time, patience and energy.

... to **Ms. Minasian** and **Ms. Bush** for always helping out whenever and wherever needed!

... to **Mary Heveran** and **Emily Zhang** for helping at the Snack Shack during Bingo Night.

... to **Mr. Paul Cuzzupe** for making all Harrington events run smoothly so none of us have to worry about the vital details that make or break an event. Thank you to custodians **Mr. Freitas** and **Mr. Miles** for helping with the set-up and clean-up of Bingo night.

... to the vendors who so generously donated gifts to Bingo Night. **Whole Foods WOBURN**, **Trader Joes Burlington**, **Snip-Its!**, **Candy Castle**, and **Rice Cubes**. Remember to support these vendors and show your appreciation by using their services and also let these vendors know "you" are from HARRINGTON SCHOOL IN LEXINGTON so these vendors know these donations make a difference. Many of schools hit these vendors up time and again, especially from Lexington. Let's make Harrington stand out!

... to all of the **parents and students** who made Bingo Night 2010 so successful.

... to all the volunteers that helped out in January and February at Green Fridays: **Mary Heveran**, **Genevieve Ng**, **Alan Shute**, **Leslie Zales**, **Catherine Monaghan**, **Yanling Zhang**, **Maria Sagan**, and, **Meg Muckenhaupt**.

... to the newest Green Friday member who stepped in at the last minute and managed Green Fridays **Wanda Ho**.

The Harrington Herald

Layout & Submissions: Cristina Burwell - (781) 862.2018, cristinaburwell@mac.com

Proofreading: Leslie Zales - lszales@rcn.com

The Harrington Herald is the monthly newsletter of the Harrington PTA, published ten times a year. In keeping with 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. Newsletter material may be emailed to Cristina Burwell (see above). If you cannot email your submission, please call her to make other arrangements.

Visit the Harrington School website for online editions and archive at <http://harrington.lexingtonma.org>.

Next Submissions Deadline: 20 March

