

A newsletter

from the Lawrence School Parent-Teacher Organization

Calendar

- 5 **March (Thursday)**
PTO Meeting
8 am Library
NOTE MORNING TIME
- 6 **March (Friday)**
Lawrence International
Dinner
- 8 **March (Sunday)**
Daylight Saving Time begins
(set clocks AHEAD one
hour)
- 10 **March (Tuesday)**
School Council Meeting
8 am 2nd floor conf. room
- 12 **March (Thursday)**
 - PTO Poetry Night
7 pm library
 - EARLY DISMISSAL
12:30 pm Grades K-8
After-school movie
- 13 **March (Friday)**
LSA registration deadline
- 19 **March (Thursday)**
EARLY DISMISSAL
12:30 pm Grades K-6
- 20 **March (Friday)**
Bingo Night
- 24 **March (Tuesday)**
Principal's Forum
7:45 am Library
- 26 **March (Thursday)**
EARLY DISMISSAL
12:30 pm Grades K-6
- 30 **March (Monday)**
MCAS testing period begins
for grades 3-8
- 1 **April (Wednesday)**
Evening Parent-Teacher
Conferences

Next Year's Budget Impact at Lawrence

On Thursday, February 12, Superintendent Bill Lupini delivered his budget message to the School Committee. He outlined an anticipated \$2 million budget shortfall for FY2010 (assuming no further cuts in revenues or increases as a result of the Federal Stimulus package) and has proposed a set of budget reductions and adjustments. How would these reductions affect Lawrence School?

- Elimination of Library Assistants: These positions would be eliminated in all schools.
- Elimination of Social Workers: These positions would be eliminated in all schools (the Lawrence allocation was .4 FTE*). Please note that guidance staffing remains unchanged.
- Reduced Literacy & Mathematics Specialists: There would be a 4.25 FTE reduction in these positions across the district. At Lawrence, we currently have 2.0 Literacy Specialists and 1.3 Math Specialists. Next year, we would receive a 3.0 FTE combined allocation for Literacy and Math, a net loss of .3 FTE. Principals have the discretion to decide how to divide the allocation between literacy and math.
- Fewer Paraprofessionals: 15 positions would be eliminated across the system. I anticipate we would lose two special education aides at Lawrence – one in the Learning Center and one from our system-wide program. On a more positive note, full-time aides will be provided in every Kindergarten in an effort to reduce (not eliminate) the need for 1:1 aides.

This is only the first step in the budget process, and I urge you to stay informed as we move through the next several steps. In particular, I encourage you to read the Superintendent's entire budget message (posted on the school department's website) to learn about other district-level reductions and the possible restoration list.

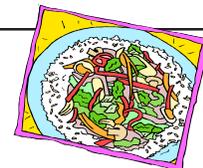
—Rick Rogers, Principal

[*Editor's note: FTE = Full Time Equivalent. 1 FTE means full-time staffing for any given position. A decimal equal to the amount of time the position is staffed represents part-time staffing. So, for example, .5 FTE is half time staffing.]

**Principal's
Corner**



**iLa Cena! Dîner!
International Dinner Night**



Come and enjoy games, music and food Friday, March 6, 2009 from 6-8 p.m. It will be a FUN night celebrating our cultural diversity. We will have a parade with flags and all the students in traditional costumes. Please email Marian Merida at mariana-merida@hotmail.com or Teresa Martinez at teremar3000@aol.com with questions or to volunteer.

AROUND BROOKLINE

The Town of Brookline's Housing Division announces a **new affordable housing opportunity in Brookline**: 20 affordable rentals and 16 affordable condominiums at the St. Aidan's development.

Applications will be sorted by lottery. In order to be included in the lottery, applications for affordable rentals are due by March 2; applications for affordable condominiums are due by March 27. Information and applications are available at: www.brooklinema.gov/housing/currentopportunities/ or in hard copy at public libraries, at the Department of Planning and Community Development at Town Hall (333 Washington Street - Room 309) or by calling 617-730-2091 for affordable condominiums, and 781-794-1057 for the rental applications.

ScienceFest 2009, March 28th

ScienceFest 2009 will be held at Runkle School on Saturday, March 28th from 10:00 to 2:00. The event will feature exciting hands-on science activities and demonstrations, such as Wingmasters Bird of Prey demonstrations (11:00 and 1:00), the Electric Pickle, Launch It engineering design challenge, Computer Take-Apart, solar telescope viewing (weather permitting), Microscope Mystery, Oobleck investigations, and much more! ScienceFest is sponsored by the Brookline Education Foundation and is open to the public. Volunteers are needed to help lead activities, set up and cleanup. If you would like to volunteer or if you'd like more information, please contact Janet MacNeil, K-8 Science Coordinator, 617-264-6403, janet_macneil@brookline.k12.ma.us.

PTO Meeting Summary— February 9, 2009

PTO President Amy Luster opened the meeting with eight people in attendance. Parents should note the following upcoming events:

- Principal Forums – 3/24, 4/28
- March 3rd Parenting Workshop – Brookline Mental Health Center
- Poetry Night March 12
- Early Release Movie on Thursday March 13. Volunteers are needed to help with event registration and event supervision. Please contact Jonas Bromberg (617-325-7012; jonas.benji@gmail.com) to volunteer.

By-law Review – Kate Shea reviewed several changes recommended by the PTO Board to make processes more efficient (e.g., meeting schedules; terms of office; nominations), and update outdated articles. She noted volunteers are needed for the Nominations Committee.

School Council Elections – Kate Shea reported on procedures for School Council Elections conducted by the PTO. Board members gathered information from other Brookline PTOs about their processes, consulted state regulations, and produced a new document that outlines and clarifies election procedures for Lawrence School. In future, there will be a longer voting period, with ballots mailed to families 2 weeks prior to the election. Ballots may be submitted in person or by mail during the two-week period, and the recording of votes being cast will be more efficient. Ballots will be counted at 2:30 on the second Friday after the May PTO meeting. Results will only report on successful candidates (no vote totals will be given). Candidates may be present when ballots are opened and counted.

Principal's Report – MCAS – Rick Rogers reviewed how the school is preparing for MCAS testing this Spring, provided examples of test questions, and made suggestions on how to help children prepare. For further information see: www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html.

Online better than paper for you? If you'd like to stop receiving a *paper* copy of the PTO Paper, please email Amy Luster (atluster@rcn.com). As long as we have your email address, you will continue to receive weekly emails that include a link to the newsletter online. Newsletters are posted on the PTO's website: www.lawrencepto.org.

Next PTO Meeting in the MORNING

The March 5th PTO meeting will be at 8 a.m. in the library. This is designated a "Special Meeting" because the PTO Board would like to propose some updates to the PTO By-Laws (example: change from one vote per family to one vote per parent or guardian). We will also go over timing/procedures for School Council elections. Rick Rogers' focused topic will be next year's classroom sections and placement process.

COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

The After Hours U Program is looking for a donation of one or two sturdy bookshelves and NEW or SLIGHTLY USED children's books. We will be decorating the bookshelves in literary themes and donating them, complete with books, to two women-and-children's shelters. If you can donate any of these items, or have a connection to a store that might make a donation, please contact Susan Fermin at susan_fermin@brookline.k12.ma.us

MEETINGS and RESOURCES for PARENTS

The Brookline Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is sponsoring "AN I.E.P. FOR MY CHILD," A Federation for Children with Special Needs Workshop, presented by Clare Vann, Special Education Attorney. Tuesday, March 3, 2009, 7-9 p.m., Runkle School Library, 50 Druce St. This workshop will explain the Individualized Education Program, the significance of the various sections of the IEP, determining placement, the role of the parents and parent response to the IEP, tracking progress, and other topics. Please note date change from our usual 3rd Tuesday of the month. Questions? Contact [David Je, jedavid@hotmail.com](mailto:David.Je@hotmail.com), or visit brooklinesepac.org.

Letters and essays included in this newsletter are based solely on the opinion of each author and do not necessarily represent the opinions of the PTO or school community.