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PAPER

April 7, 2009

A newsletter

from the Lawrence School Parent-Teacher Organization

Calendar

- 10 April (Friday)**
SCHOOL CLOSED
Day of Low Attendance
(Good Friday)
- 15–16 April (Wed–Thur)**
Grades 5/6 Play
- 16 April (Thursday)**
EARLY DISMISSAL
12:30 pm Grades K–6
- 20 April (Monday)**
SCHOOL CLOSED
Patriots Day
- 21–24 April (Tue–Fri)**
SCHOOL CLOSED
April Vacation
- 30 April (Thursday)**
Principal's Forum
7:45 am library
- 4 May (Monday)**
PTO Meeting
7 pm library
- 6 May (Wednesday)**
Japanese Fun Fair
- 11 May (Monday)**
MCAS testing period begins
for Grades 3–8
- 12 May (Tuesday)**
School Council Meeting
8 am 2nd floor conf. room

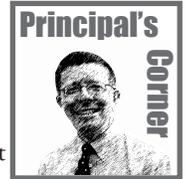
**MCAS English Language Arts
Remaining Dates**
(Testing begins at 8:15 each day)
Grades 6 and 8
on April 7, 8, and 13

Teaching New Communication Skills

As adults, some of us have experienced hitting “send” on a cryptic email message and later wishing we had waited until cooler heads prevailed before responding. For our older students, email has become snail mail. Social networking websites and texting allow for even more immediate real-time exchange of messages—without the nuance that comes from reading another’s reactions through facial expressions and body language. Absent face-to-face communication, it may be easier to slip into the realm of put-downs or bullying. Even if this communication occurs outside of school, it can spill over into the school day, leading to conflict or students not feeling respected or safe. If and when this occurs, we as a school respond, first by speaking with students involved and second by informing parents and enlisting your support to address inappropriate communication. If the communication rises to the level of harassment or threats, we will involve the police.

Fortunately, we have an ongoing collaboration with the Brookline Police Department. Officer Katherine McCabe teaches our AWARE program in sixth grade. Community Relations Officer Prentice Pilot teaches lessons with technology specialist Kirsten Alper to our seventh

graders on internet safety and online bullying. Following an incident involving some of our sixth graders earlier this year, we requested Officer Pilot meet with all of our sixth graders to talk about text messaging. It’s essential that school and parents work together to teach children respectful ways to communicate, whether face-to-face or in various electronic forms. We welcome your suggestions for additional opportunities to provide support and education for students and parents.



Lawrence Park Pride

We have found trampled tulips in front of the school and some broken tree limbs on the playground. Please help us remind others to treat our beautiful grounds and park with the pride and respect they deserve.

Optimal Learning (and Proofreading)

No, we are not lounging around at school. “Lawrence strives to provide an optimal learning (not leaning) environment.” The glaring typo in the letter I sent home last week about placement was completely my error. Meanwhile, please remember:

Parent placement forms are due April 15.
—Rick Rogers, Principal

Special Education Forum

Superintendent Lupini will hold an open parent forum on special education on Tuesday, April 14, 7:00 to 8:30 p.m., at Town Hall in the first floor multi-purpose room. This is the final forum of Dr. Lupini’s parent forum series this year. Parents and community members are encouraged to bring their questions, comments and concerns about any aspect of special education in Brookline directly to the chief. The event is co-sponsored by Brookline Special Education Advisory Council (SEPAC). For more information about Brookline SEPAC or to get on the SEPAC e-distribution list, go to www.brooklinesepac.org.



email your stories by friday 4 p.m. to newsletter@lawrencePTO.org
To download a copy of this newsletter go to www.lawrencePTO.weebly.com

Grab a Book!

Lawrence Reads evenings provide a wonderful opportunity for parents and students to read the same book and come together with other families for lively discussion.

“Outward Bound” is the theme of the next Lawrence Reads on Wednesday, May 6. For information or to RSVP, contact parent *Melanie Marcus* at mlmarcus@mindspring.com. Featured books (all available at the library) include: Grades 3 and 4: William’s Steig’s *Abel’s Island* Author William Steig’s rich language captures readers completely when Abel, a very

civilized mouse, finds himself cast away on an uninhabited island. Grades 5 and 6: Jean Craighead George’s *The Talking Earth* Author and naturalist Jean Craighead George records Billie Wind’s journey into the Florida Everglades as she sets out to test the legends of her Indian ancestors.



Networks Needed

At the last PTO meeting, Community Relations Officer Prentice Pilot and Lawrence’s own Kirsten Alper came to share “Advice and Insights on Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying.” In addition, June Harris from Brookline Coalition Against Substance Abuse (B-CASA) came to talk about parent networks at the high school and the interest in starting them in the middle school years. The objective of the Parent Resource Network is to provide timely information and advice to parents in order to support healthy communication and relationships between parents and teens. Interested in starting a group at your child’s grade level at Lawrence? Contact *Kate Shea* at kdshea@gmail.com. Find out more about B-CASA at www.brookline.k12.ma.us/TEACHING+AND+LEARNING/Programs/B-CASA.



Calling Volunteers!

Volunteer Opportunity



• **The School Council** will need one new parent representative in the fall. School Council advises the principal on the development of a school improvement plan and supports the work to address these goals. The council has an equal number of elected parents as teachers and principal. Parents on the council provide a valuable and welcome perspective. Any parent interested in serving a two-year term on the Lawrence School Council should contact *Rick Rogers* (Rick_Rogers@brookline.k12.ma.us) or *Kate Shea* (kdshea@gmail.com) before May 1. Candidates are required to submit a statement (form will be provided) no later than May 1 and should plan on attending the May PTO meeting on May 4. Voting will start after May 6 and end Friday May 15.

• The PTO nominating committee is looking for a **co-President** and **Assistant Treasurer**; please contact *Joanne Liautaud*, joanneliataud@hotmail.com, or *Laura O’Brien*, LOBRIEN186@msn.com, if you’re interested in these or other roles in the PTO board. You can nominate someone else, too! Other roles in the PTO include **PTO Website manager** (60 minutes per week uploading newsletter and other information); **New Family Contact** (welcome new non-Kindergarten families and help coordinate a welcome coffee early in the year); and **International Dinner Night co-Coordinator** (the event has grown and Mariana and Teresa would love another set of hands). Please contact *Amy Luster* at atluster@rcn.com to learn more.

Music to Our Ears

A BIG thank you to **Lucia Lin** for so generously volunteering her time to perform at Lawrence with visiting pianist/composer **Gabriela Frank** on March 27. Grades K–6 were wowed by their virtuosity as musicians and learned a lot about how composers develop ideas and collaborate with others in writing music. As one third grader commented, “I like how they worked so well together as a team.” Another student observed, “You rarely get to meet a composer and hear what they were thinking about when they wrote something.” Thanks, as always, to the PTO for sponsoring this enrichment program.

Kudos to the amazingly talented band, cast, and crew who put so much energy and effort into this year’s PTO play, “Nightmare on Brook Street.” It was truly delicious taste of Halloween in April.



Parents’ Night Out

Line up your babysitter now for Friday, May 8, from 7:00 to 10:00 p.m. The second annual **Lawrence Parent Party** is a *funraiser* and an opportunity for adults to get together without kids. If you’re interested in helping, contact *Joanne Liautaud* at 617-232-5690 and/or come to our first planning meeting on Thursday, April 9, in the cafeteria after drop off.

Community Exchange

Interested in hosting an **Italian student** for the summer? A guidance counselor at a school in the country’s Piedmont region is looking to place a 17-year-old boy here in Brookline. This bright, friendly, outgoing student will teach Italian to your children in exchange for one-month accommodation (July). Contact *Maria Paola Crevola* at mypc@tele2.it for more information.