



Lyseth Newsletter

March 27, 2009

Principal
Lenore M. Williams

Assistant Principal
Sandra Gorsuch-Plummer

Principal's Message

Dear Families and Friends of Lyseth School,

This is an extremely busy time of year here at Lyseth!

What's New at Lyseth?

The month of March has brought with it the Maine Educational Assessments at grades 3-5. I hope the informational brochure for parents sent out prior to the test administration was helpful to you. We appreciate you making this a priority and making appointments around the testing dates and times.

You may be hearing about the Chinese Enrichment Program brought to Lyseth students through our PTA and the Enrichment Committee. I am amazed at how quickly young children learn even the most abstract concepts! Please take a moment to ask your child what he/she has experienced as part of this program.

Student Supports

Students in all grade levels are involved in various intervention and enrichment opportunities here at Lyseth. This might take place before the school day begins (Math support, Homework or Computer Club, Letter Club). This model of support provides students with a "second helping" of instruction to develop reading comprehension and fluency proficiency as readers and/or supports an area of strength such as writing. It is our belief that we need to meet the diverse needs of all learners and the Lyseth staff is committed to providing a support where and when it is needed as well as extensions of classroom learning.

Professional Learning

Our school improvement goals continue to focus on math instruction and the implementation of the new math program "Investigations". During our Early Release Wednesdays, teachers continue to collaborate and plan for daily instruction. In the coming weeks we will join staff from neighboring elementary schools to work in grade level teams to develop deeper understanding of the new curriculum. The focus of our professional development work in the coming school year will undoubtedly be developing proficiency in differentiation of instruction to meet the needs of all learners.

Student Safety

Please support us in our efforts to keep the traffic loops in the front of the building moving smoothly during dismissal. When you pick up your child at the end of

the day, please drive up the right side of the circle ensuring that students will enter your vehicle safely from the right of your vehicle. If you don't see your child waiting, you should circle back around the loop. We currently have children crossing the circle unsafely to meet a parent or guardian whose vehicle is parked on the left of the circle, passing in front of moving vehicles. Safety is our primary focus. This also impedes efficient traffic flow. I need to ask for your help at the sides of the building as well (near the playing fields and the area near Junior Street). Please do not use this parking area if you do not have approved access.

As always, I want to express my gratitude to our wonderful parent community. Classroom teachers rely heavily on this strong partnership to ensure that each student experiences success!

Lenore Williams, Principal

Student Placement

As the warmer weather nips at our heels and parents and teachers come together to discuss student progress, conversations often turn to next year's placement. I'd like to take this opportunity to hopefully diminish some of the anxiety around this issue. I'll begin by saying that we have met with the Assistant Superintendent in an effort to streamline and improve our placement process. One aspect of the process that will not change is our commitment to ensuring all students are appropriately placed and classrooms are balanced to represent a cross section of our student population.

We maintain our commitment to careful consideration of matching learning styles to instructional styles and methods. With that said, I welcome your input regarding your child's learning style and needs. Parents that are not new to Lyseth will notice the absence of the Parental Input Form for Student Placement. I would ask that if you desire to have input to this process that you drop me a brief e-mail or note describing your child's unique learning characteristics. We will begin our process in early May and ask that all input be submitted no later than **Monday, May 4, 2009**. Be assured that your child's current teacher will be an integral part of the placement process. While I value and seek input to develop a comprehensive profile of your child as a learner and an individual and strive to make the best placements possible, it is not always feasible to honor every request. We hope that you will respect our professional judgment in this very thoughtful process.

Banking Program

On October 24th we re-opened our branch of the Cumberland County Federal Credit Union. On the first banking day we had over 300 pint-sized customers as well as several staffers. Our banking program continues to grow every year and is a favorite among our students. Lyseth is proud to offer this innovative program that encourages students to save at a young age and watch their money grow. It is never too late to sign up for the banking program! We welcome all students and it only takes \$1.00 to open an account. Applications are available in the front office. The Credit Union is open every Friday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.



Volunteers Galore

To date, we have 357 parent volunteers who help out in classrooms, library, computer lab, Book Fair, chaperone field trips, help with PTA sponsored events such as the fall fundraiser, talent show, school fair and many, many more places. We consider our school very fortunate to have such involved parents who donate their time, effort and talent. If you would like to sign up to volunteer, please contact our Partnership Developer, Sylvie Montello, at 874-8215 or e-mail her at montes@portlandschools.org

“Volunteers are not paid because they are worthless—It’s because they are priceless.”

Wee Deliver

This is our 7th year offering the “Wee Deliver” program that was introduced in 1990 by the Postal Service to improve reading and writing skills of elementary school children. It has grown to include more than 20,000 schools across the country and Lyseth is the only Portland school participating.

How it works: Lyseth has been modeled as a miniature town with street addresses. Each classroom is given a directory, colorful stationery, envelopes and stickers. Large mailboxes have been placed throughout the school where students can deposit their weekly in-school mail. Every Thursday during recess, parent volunteers oversee 5th grade students who pick up the mail, bring it to the post office for sorting, then they deliver outgoing mail to classrooms. The Wee Deliver Postal Program is a wonderful learning opportunity for our students. It provides the students with real life experiences in which to apply basic skills such as writing a letter, addressing envelopes, using the mail system and using zip codes. It provides knowledge of how mail is processed, but best of all, it unifies the student body through a student-centered school-wide communication system. Throughout the year, we will be providing “seasonal” colorful stationery, envelopes and stickers to students (thanks to a DonorsChoose.org grant) to encourage the students to write.



Student Council

The Lyseth student council has been meeting once a week on Mondays for several weeks now. The council is comprised of 4th and 5th grade students. We have been brainstorming ideas and deciding what areas the student council wants to work on for the rest of the school year. One of the ideas that we have selected is playground equipment. The council already wrote to Mrs. Williams about their idea and a request for resources to buy new and additional playground equipment; in particular playground balls, jump ropes, etc. The student council then surveyed all the grades to see what equipment all of the students wanted to have for their recess time. We are now compiling that information and hope to purchase some additional equipment soon.

Another idea that we have talked about is community service. A student came to our meeting this past Monday and suggested that the whole school be involved in community service. This student was responding to a “call to action” from our new President for all Americans to be involved in their communities. The student council will now work on this suggestion together and plan how to involve the whole school.

This student council is very dedicated and enthusiastic. They have many ideas and suggestions to improve and help our school. I enjoy working with them immensely.

Lost & Found

Once again our Lost & Found container is overflowing! When you come to school for your parent/teacher conference, please take a moment to check Lost & Found. On April 6, all items left in the Lost & Found container will be taken to a local charity.

Meet and Greet Superintendent, Dr. James Morse

You are invited to meet and greet Portland's next Superintendent, Dr. James Morse. The Portland School Committee and Dr. Morse would like to hear from you regarding your ideas and thoughts for the Portland Public Schools. You will have an opportunity to hear a little about Dr. Morse and have him answer questions that may be on your mind.

April 28th 6 p.m. @ Lyman Moore Middle School (Lyman Moore, Lyseth

and Casco Bay Parent Groups)

May 8th 6 p.m. @ Presumpscot Elementary (Presumpscot, EECS and PHS Parent Groups)

May 12th 6 p.m. @ King Middle School (King, Reiche and Nathan Clifford Parent Groups)

May 21st 6 p.m. @ Deering High School Cafeteria (DHS, Lincoln, Longfellow, Hall and Riverton Parent Groups)

May 22nd 6 p.m. To Be scheduled possibly at Peaks Island Community- awaiting word from Peaks if this is possible. (Peaks Community)

If you are unable to attend your particular school's session, please feel free to attend another.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or e-mail Sarah Thompson, Portland School Committee At Large. She can be reached at 761-9275 or THOMP@portlandschools.org

Summer Champs

United Way *Summer Champs* is a special scholarship program generously funded by the Libra Foundation that offers fun, friendship and adventure for Portland Public School students in grades 4, 5 and 6. Each student in these grades is eligible for a \$500 Summer Champs campership this coming summer if they meet the scholastic, school behavior requirements and community service piece established by our school. [The deadline for Summer Champs Application #1 is April 17, 2009.](#)

Upcoming Events

April 2	Jump Rope for Heart
April 8	Early Release (2:00 PM)
April 20	Holiday
April 21-24	April Recess
April 29	Early Release (2:00 PM)
May 1	PTA Ice Cream Social
May 6	Early Release (2:00 PM)
May 6	Incoming KDG Parent Orientation
May 12	Grade 5 Wax Museum
May 13	Early Release (2:00 PM)
May 14	Talent Show Dress Rehearsal
May 15	Talent Show
May 20	Early Release (2:00 PM)
May 25	Holiday
May 27	Early Release (2:00 PM)

Important Announcement

Effective April 1, students no longer need to wear snow pants unless we have an unforeseen snow event with a 2 inch (or more) accumulation.

A friendly reminder to return "Visitor" and "Volunteer" badges when leaving school.

Lyseth Raffle Fundraiser

On behalf of Lyseth School, we wish to take this opportunity to thank the PTA and all who participated in our Math Fundraiser earlier this school year. Proceeds from the fundraiser helped us purchase manipulatives to enhance our *Investigations* math program. Some manipulatives purchased are: pattern blocks, attribute blocks, pocket

calendars, coin sets, number cubes, color tiles, two-color counters, clock faces, demonstration clocks, geoblocks, geoboards, number wall charts, number lines, snap cubes, power polygons, mirrors, wooden cubes, geometric solids, cm cubes and charts.

We are grateful for your generosity and your commitment to Lyseth

School. Thank you for your support.



Winter Under Cultivation is as Arable as Spring

- Emily Dickinson

The Lyseth School Garden Club has been blossoming with ideas and plowing ahead with projects. The students have been working on making energy efficiency awareness a priority to students and staff through

announcements and posters. For example, the kids are urging that people shut off monitors when not in use as they consume up to 150 watts of electricity. During the holidays, decorations made from LED lights were used to adorn the magnolia tree in front of school.

A silvery, icy, winter display using recycled materials was created outside room 20.

Students have discussed the importance of using materials grown locally or using items found on walks to provide winter decorations. Fuel costs account for only 10% of imported foods or flowers but having strawberries out of season or fresh roses add to the sense of instant demand and consumerism that is adding to the stress of the planet. Some ideas you family can use:

- Use frozen, locally grown berries for fruit smoothies
- Force forsythia branches into early bloom by bring some in and placing in a vase of water
- Use interesting branches to decorate a table or counter...maybe even one broken off due to ice storm damage
- Use colorful fruit and vegetables such as apples, nuts, or sweet potatoes decorated with pine cones to make a center piece instead of using fresh flowers

Students have also been rooting plants from cuttings and growing seeds provided by parent donations.

For those of you, like Emily, waiting for Spring...the average daily temperature has gone up a degree. Can't you just feel it!

Incoming Kindergarten Registration

Any child who will reach the age of five by October 15, 2009, is eligible to begin our full day kindergarten program beginning in September, 2009.

Kindergarten registration will be held during the month of March, between the hours of 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

The official documents necessary for registration are:

- Child's birth certificate (with raised city seal)
- Immunization record
- Proof of residency in the Lyseth district (such as a current utility bill or property tax bill)

Author Visit

On January 13, 2009 the students at Lyseth School enjoyed a day with local author Phillip Hoose. Mr. Hoose is a resident of Portland. Phillip Hoose is a widely-acclaimed author of books, essays, articles, stories and songs. He is a graduate of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Sciences and has been a staff member of The Nature Conservancy since 1977. Mr. Hoose is also a founding member of the Children's Music Network and resides in Portland, Maine.

He has written 4 books for children; Hey, Little Ant, We Were There Too!, It's Our World, Too! and Claudette Colvin. Hey, Little Ant is a song that he wrote with his daughter Hannah Hoose. Claudette Colvin is his newest release. On February 23rd at USM's Glickman Library, Mr. Hoose with Claudette Colvin will discuss the segregated Montgomery, Alabama of Colvin's childhood and her refusal as a 15-year-old in 1955 to give up her seat on a city bus, and her role as the star plaintiff in the federal court case Browder vs. Gayle. He has also written several books for adults.

Students were treated to sessions by our visiting author throughout the day. The morning began with 3rd,

3rd, 4th and 5th grade students assembling in the gym for a discussion of his book Hey, Little Ant. This was followed by a similar program for grades K, 1st and second. Mr. Hoose read from his book, sang and played his guitar. He also spent some time discussing what qualities a writer needs to be successful.

Fourth and fifth grade students attended an in-depth presentation about his book The Race to Save the Lord God Bird. This session was geared for the upper elementary students and touched on the importance of protecting endangered species. In The Race to Save the Lord God Bird he introduces students to the pioneering conservationists who scrambled to study, record, photograph and save the ivory-bill before its habitat fell victim to the developing nation's appetite for timber. Students were enthralled by the discussion and it was the topic of many lunchroom conversations.

Grades 1st through 3rd had grade level sessions in the library where they had time to hear more about how he came up with the storylines for some of his books. They also sang and were able to ask Mr. Hoose questions about the writing process.

The staff had a chance to visit and spend time with Mr. Hoose during a luncheon in the library. Staff members provided a lovely lunch of soups, salads, sandwiches and desserts for our guest. It was a wonderful chance for the teachers to meet and converse with our special guest.

The PTA Enrichment Committee hosted a well attended evening event. After a brief talk about some of his books, Mr. Hoose took questions from the audience. He also was kind enough to read a brief excerpt from his book, Perfect One Removed. To conclude the evening, Mr. Hoose graciously signed autographs and visited with students.

A tremendous thank you goes to Kathi Paradise for organizing this wonderful, enriching event for the Lyseth community.