

East Longmeadow Public Schools

Our mission in the East Longmeadow Public Schools is to promote Achievement and Accountability in all endeavors as we educate today for the challenges of tomorrow.



SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR SCHOOLS

Volume 1, Issue 2

SPRING, 2003

A Message From Your School Committee

A lot has changed since we were in school. Parents often make this statement as they walk through our schools and talk to our staff. The past five decades have seen many changes in education- from the federal, state, and local level. Here are just a few of the changes since we went to school:

- College and University entrance courses have all increased in number and in academic rigor since the graduating classes of the 70's. The effect on districts has included many more levels of courses, additional preparatory courses, and support courses that structure from high school down to elementary schools.

- The federal IDEA bill, passed in 1975 requires all children to be served in a "least restrictive environment" that serves the needs of special education students. This has caused school districts to offer specialized programs for all handicapping conditions of students. The Federal IDEA and State Dept. of Education specify regulations limiting the number of special education students to 8 children per teacher in a classroom. The Federal IDEA and State Dept. of Education specify regulations limiting the number of regular students in a classroom to 15 in early childhood if seven of the students have special needs (mixed inclusion classrooms.)

- The federal government requires special education students to be served starting at three years of age. This has had an impact on elementary schools nationwide.

- The state teacher/ student ratio target of no more than 20 students per teacher at the elementary school was directed by the State Department of Education in the 1980's.

- The students of the 21st century differ from those of the 1970's not only academically, but also in health issues. While childbirth mortality rates have gone down, the special education and severe health issue rates have skyrocketed. School nurses and health programs are now a core component to each school, thus requiring space and additional budgeting.

- Computers and computer labs are now a core-learning tool that was not around in the 1970's. Clearly, every career and business now uses computers. Our educational programs now incorporate computer skills and technology into all of our curricula to prepare our students. Thus, computer labs require space in our schools.

- Fine Arts and Physical Education are now core Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. This means that the Fine Arts and Physical Education programs must be scheduled and taught with the same frequency as all subjects. In the 1970's Fine Arts

and Physical Education were considered extra. Thus, personnel, space, and budgets are now required for today's students.

- The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) is new this decade. The increasing accountability of this statewide testing initiative has required much from school systems in the form of budget, programs, human resources and remedial programs, and space.

- The existing East Longmeadow elementary schools, built in the 1950's and 1960's have exceeded their capacity- especially since there are fewer elementary schools serving our community than there were in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's.

- A fourth elementary school, North Elementary- also called Pleasant View, was utilized to educate and house elementary students. We no longer have a fourth elementary school. Thus, the enrollments of the early 1970's that are now exceeded by the enrollments of 2003 can't be housed into the three existing elementary schools.

- The high school no longer has open campus as it did in the 1970's. With open campus many students could come and go.

Now, all students are required to be in a class all hours of the school day. Thus, while protecting and keeping our students safe, space fills quickly when all students are on campus in our buildings. Open campus allowed student schedules that "flexed". By ensuring security and closing our campus, we also committed ourselves to additional courses for total enrollment scheduling.

- East Longmeadow High School no longer uses study halls. Study halls, used in the 1970's were great at capturing and holding large numbers of students. Multiple student groups could be scheduled into a single study hall. However, there was little academic value to study halls and they no longer serve the mission of accountability in education. We need every hour possible to educate our stu-



Inside this issue:

	Page
Music And The Arts	2
ELPS NCLB Report Cards	2
Endowment Supports Schools	3
National Board Certification	3
School Committee Meetings	4
ELPS On The World Wide Web	4
ELHS Career Center	4

dents.

- Student Time And Learning is new since 1997.

This state regulation requires all students to be in school a minimum of 990 hours per school year.

There you have it. I bet you didn't realize a few of these changes have taken place since we were in school. As they say in the education business, the one thing that stays constant is change itself.

Music and the Arts Key to Academic Success

Encouraging your child to participate in the arts is an important step in promoting his or her academic success. In the "No Child Left Behind Act", Congress named the arts as one of the core subjects that all schools should teach. Students studying the arts learn teamwork, self-discipline, problem solving, and creative thinking skills. The arts provide an outlet for creative expression and an opportunity for students to develop their imaginations.

The research speaks for itself. A study at Columbia University's Teachers College in 1999 demonstrates that students and teachers benefit in schools with strong arts climates: "Students with high levels of arts training were found to be more cooperative, more willing to share what they had learned, and better able to express their ideas and use their imaginations."

In a study of 7500 college students, music majors had the highest reading scores among all majors including English, chemistry, biology and math. Among applicants to medical school, physician and biologist Lewis Thomas found that 66% of music majors who applied to medical school were accepted, the highest per-



centage of any undergraduate major.

An article in Educational Leadership, November 1998, cites a study showing that, "first graders who received instruction in music had significantly higher reading scores than those first graders who did not receive the instruction." The Fine Arts Department in East Longmeadow offers students the opportunity to benefit from participation in the arts at every level. Art classes, band, chorus, and drama are all activities that have been proven through educational research to provide significant

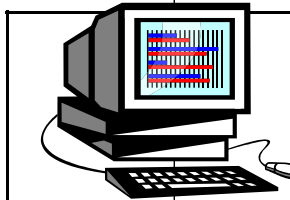
academic benefits for students who get involved.

The arts challenge students physically, intellectually, and creatively. No other subject exercises the body, mind, and spirit in a single activity. We invite you and your child to get involved in the arts and put your imagination to work. In the words of Albert Einstein, "Imagination is more important than knowledge."

"first graders who received instruction in music had significantly higher reading scores than those first graders who did not receive the instruction."

ELPS Publishes NCLB Report Cards

The United States Department of Education re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education act is now known as the *No Child Left Behind Act* and is also known by the acronym, NCLB. This federal bill requires all schools and districts to publish report cards on each public school and district in the nation. The information contained in each report card is prescribed in the bill and includes information on the school's performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) by content area, grade level, and for particular student populations. Comparison data from the district, the state, and from 2001 are also provided. In addition, this report includes other information as required by the federal *No Child Left Behind Act*. East Longmeadow Public Schools is proud to communicate this information to our community at the following websites:



Mapleshade Elementary School: <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/msrc.htm>

Mountain View Elementary School: <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/mvrc.htm>

Birchland Park Middle School: <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/bprc.htm>

East Longmeadow High School: <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/hsrc.htm>

District Report Card : <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/elpsrc.htm>

Meadow Brook Elementary School: <http://www.eastlongmeadow.org/Schools/mbrc.htm>

The data contained in these report cards is based upon the most recently completed school year. Department Of Education data does not reflect the current status of enrollment and most recent MCAS scores.

EL Endowment Continues Its Support Of our Schools

The East Longmeadow Educational Endowment Fund is a permanent resource set up to augment the educational opportunities available to all the students attending E. Longmeadow public schools. It attempts to provide funds that are not present in the school budget at the time of need. The Endowment is a 501 C3 non-profit organization incorporated in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 1996 and operates as an independent entity. It is set up to last for the life of the schools and the money may only be used for educational efforts.

The board of directors is comprised of volunteers from the community along with a non-voting member from the school committee. The board determines the level of funding that will be made available to the schools on an annual basis and chooses which grant requests will be funded. Teachers and administrators are encouraged to submit grants based on the needs they see. The board is the most interested in funding requests that affect the largest number of students for the longest time. Fund-raising activities are directed at the business and community and include an annual "Dance for Education" and a golf tournament. The current balance is approximately \$200,000.00 and it is invested with the assistance of professional money managers including Vanguard and Morgan Stanley. A part time independent contractor is paid to help with the administrative activities of the organization and approximately 95% of all dollars collected are placed in the endowment for use by the schools.

Since inception nearly \$100,000 has been put back in the school system

All grade levels and virtually all subjects have been touched by the grants over the last 7 years. Music programs, the Gifted and Talented program, basic reading and writing skills in the elementary grades, specialized computer programs at the high school, foreign language subjects, computer labs, and English literature are just a few of the areas that have received funds. All five schools in town have received grants numerous times. Since inception nearly \$100,000 has been put back in the school system. Many of the grants made in the past are still paying dividends today as the programs, equipment, or subject matter are still being utilized.

For additional information please contact Steve Graham at 789-1300 (w) or 525-0989 (h) or sg@tonerplastics.com. We'd love your tax deductible donation which may be sent to PO Box 1011; E. Longmeadow, MA 01028. All donations will be gratefully acknowledged. Volunteers are welcome at any time.



National Board Certification—Better Teaching, Better Learning, Better Schools

Measuring accomplished teaching is complicated. Unlike a race that determines an undisputed winner, National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification requires the application of professional judgment. Candidates are judged by their peers on standards that leading educators and scholars have determined are essential to learning. An NBPTS certificate is a credential attesting that a teacher has been assessed by his or her peers as one who is accomplished, makes sound professional judgments about student learning, and acts effectively on those judgments.

The mission of NBPTS is to establish high and rigorous standards for what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do, to develop and operate a national voluntary system to assess and certify teachers who meet these standards, and to advance related education reforms for the purpose of improving student learning in American schools.

During the school year teacher candidates assemble four portfolios that include, among other things, videotapes of classroom interactions and samples of student work, plus the teacher's reflective commentary on the evidence of accomplished teaching in the classroom. Candidates also document their education-related work outside the classroom. During the summer, they demonstrate their knowledge of teaching generally, and their subject area specifically, at a timed series of written assessments presented via computer at a specified assessment center. Trained NBPTS evaluators who teach in the same field as the candidate judge all components of the assessments.

Among the benefits of National Board Certification are improved teaching, improved student learning, rejuvenating professional activity, and invigorating, challenging self-assessment.

East Longmeadow now has four Nationally Board Certified Teachers: Leanne Morrissey, Donna Richards, and Louisa-May Bouchard at Meadow Brook School and Joseph Calabrese at East Longmeadow High School. This year 91 of the 67,000 teachers in Massachusetts received this prestigious designation.



Ms. Anne Marie Jagodowski, Mapleshade School's 2002-2003 Massachusetts Teacher Of The Year Finalist, teaches a history lesson to her third grade students on the settling of Massachusetts by the Pilgrims.

East Longmeadow Public Schools

Dr. Edward W. Costa
 Superintendent of Schools
 180 Maple Street

Phone: 413-525-5450
 Fax: 413-525-5456

Questions or comments about our newsletter? Contact
 Chris Sullivan, newsletter editor:
 csullivan@eastlongmeadow.org

2003 ELPS School Committee Meeting

Schedule: 7:30 p.m. in
 the High School
 Conference Room

MAY 27	OCT 7
JUN 10	OCT 21
JUN 24	NOV 4
JUL 22	NOV 18
AUG 26	DEC 2
SEP 9	DEC 16
SEP 23	

Tune In



School Committee meet-
 ings are broadcast live
 on ELCAT, cable chan-
 nel 5

East Longmeadow Public Schools School Committee Members:

Ms. Karen Wheeler, Chair
Ms. Gina Szykaruk, Vice Chair
Mr. Daniel Manley
Mr. Thomas McGowan
Mr. Bruce Stebbins

We're on the Web!
www.eastlongmeadow.org

Communication between the home and school is very important to us here at East Longmeadow Public Schools and so keeping that in mind, each of our five schools has been busy expanding and updating their Web pages. We are making every effort to keep the information up to date.

Our web pages have links to the Handbooks, Code of Conduct, Calendars of Events, Messages from the Principals, Student Activities, Messages from the Teachers, and School Lunch Menu, just to name a few. Please take a few moments and browse our sites, and see what is new!

The ELHS Career Center is Opening Doors to the Future.

Since its creation seven years ago as a continuing partnership between the East Longmeadow Chamber of Commerce and East Longmeadow High School, the objective of the Career Center has been to offer career exploration at many levels. It offers students a focus on career pathways and helps them to ascertain particulars of various occupations. The anticipated outcome for students is to be informed of academic and educational requirements and to gain knowledge and experience of workplace environments to assist them in making informed decisions regarding their future.

Exploration activities include:

Individual career counseling and assessment

Career speakers

Job shadows

Internships

Work study positions

Resume writing, job application, and interview support

Job shadows are an activity where students gain a realistic view of an occupation or an entire career cluster by sharing a "day in the life" at a worksite. ELHS had recent placements with a fire-fighter, graphic designer, middle school teacher, non-profit organizer, newspaper reporter and a marketing manager. Students are able to have first hand workplace exposure, ask questions, network, and apply communication skills.

An internship is a work-based learning experience outside the traditional classroom. Students typically intern for 4 to 7-1/2 hours per week. Interns are with educators, day care facilities, local police departments, retail outlets, auto body operations, and business offices. Students develop transferable academic, technical, and employability skills while earning credits.

Students are encouraged to check out the Career Center JOB BOARD, which offers postings of part time, summer jobs and community service activities.

ELHS Career Center strives to connect learning with the world of work, linking the broader community and enhancing student understanding of their own interests and potential.

Questions or comments? Please contact Debra Hunter at 413-525-6127

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.